# THE DISGUISE.

VOL. I.

# THE

# DISGUISE,

## A

## DRAMATIC NOVEL.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

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# THE PREFACE.

THE unprecedented attempt I have made in the following Sheets, would require apology, were not ſo meer a trifle below criticiſm. I cannot ſuppoſe that any critic, ſeated on high in judicatorial dignity, will condeſcend to glance his ſcrutinizing eye over my inſignificant performance. From the gentle writers, and ſtill more gentle readers of Novels, I flatter myſelf I may eaſily obtain pardon for deviating from eſtabliſhed method, when I tell them my inducement: Epiſtolizing, journalizing, and narrating, have been ſo hackney'd, that Novels grow unprofitable to the writer, and inſipid to the reader. I have for ſome time obſerved, that both were threatened with no ſmall misfortune; a neceſſity on one ſide to give up the pen for want of variety whereon to employ it; and on the other, a moſt melancholy deprivation of any thing new: The imagination of my fair

countrywomen is threatened with a famine; and they have reaſon to fear that their only reſource will be to re-peruſe books already peruſed: Melancholy reſource! For what is ſo tedious as a twice told tale? The moſt tender hearted female enters no deeper into the diſtreſſes of a Heroine who is no longer new to her, than ſhe does into thoſe of her dear and intimate friends; her virtue and her compaſſion equally ſupine, ſhe reads with dry eyes, and regular pulſe, that the imaginary dame is in the hands of an enterprizing lover, or deceitfully conveyed into a brothel; ſhe no longer trembles at the offended father's rage; nor does her heart beat with ſympathetic joy, when paſt diſtreſſes are overpaid by the raptures of a tender meeting. The never-enough-to-be-feared approach of a dearth of Novels, appears to me in a very ſerious light on other accounts. When the imagination of my countrywomen can no longer find employment, what is left them but to realize? Unaccuſtomed to ſit down contented within the narrow circle of probability, and inſipidly dream away life in a regular ſeries of common events, they muſt ſeek thoſe adventures in the world which ceaſed to be offered to them in books; nor would the enterprizing genius be diſcouraged by any difficulties in the taſk, for tho' only ſome can write, yet all can like a Novel. Even thoſe who are beſt inclined to realize the ſcene, may ſuſpend the execution in hopes of learning ſome adventures ſtill more

delectable

delectable than any yet invented; but when the road to inſtruction is ſhut, the hour of ſelection is arrived, they have nothing farther to do than to chuſe their plan, and proceed to action.

In this hour of danger, philanthropy ſuggeſted that a new mode might revive the drooping ſpirit of romance, and that when epiſtolary correſpondencies were grown dull, narratives tedious, and journals heavy, dialogue might ſupply the place. If the ſubſtitute is favourably received by the public, I hope other retailers of imagination will find the path I have ſhewn them is tolerably ſmooth and pleaſant; if it meets with a contrary reception, it will not be the firſt time I have talked to no purpoſe.

# Dramatis Perſonæ.

## MEN.

Earl of BRUTON, Father to Lord LESSINGHAM.
Sir JEFFERY EDMONDS.
Mr. MARTIN.
Mr. EDMONDS.
Lord LESSINGHAM, formerly lover to CAROLINE.
Sir RICHARD LUTON, lover to EMILIA.
Mr. HENBURY, Tutor to HARRIET.
JAMES, Servant to Mr. EDMONDS.
Servants.

## WOMEN.

Lady EDMONDS.
HARRIET, her ſuppoſed Daughter.
EMILIA, CAROLINE, } Daughters to Mr. MARTIN.
Mrs. HENBURY, Governeſs to HARRIET.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

*Enter Mr.* HENBURY *and* HARRIET.

HENBURY.

ARE you mad, Miſs Harriet?

*Har.* If I am not you will make me ſo, by continually repeating that appellation. Is it not enough that I muſt be treated as a woman by others? cannot you at leaſt indulge me in appellatives more ſuitable to my ſex?

*Hen.* To what purpoſe? Shall I to gratify an idle humour, to indulge your averſion to your feminine

minine appearance, run the hazard of diſcovering a ſecret, ſo long and ſo induſtriouſly concealed.

*Har.* Odious ſecret! How ridiculous a figure do I make to myſelf! I can no longer ſupport it.

*Hen.* You would not ſurely after all the difficulties ſhe has ſtruggled through in this affair, fruſtrate the tender care of ſo excellent a parent! You are incapable of ſuch ingratitude: ſhall lady Edmonds, who deſerves and receives univerſal reſpect, be inſulted only by her own ſon!

*Har.* No, my friend, I not only reſpect, I venerate, I love my mother, and my heart is not ungrateful, while it laments the conſequences of her exceſſive tenderneſs, for to her too tender fears and not to caprice I am ſenſible this ſtrange diſguiſe is owing; but I cannot believe it was neceſſary; and think you, who had ſo great a ſhare of her good opinion and confidence, might have convinced her that her ſuſpicions were unjuſt and her fears vain.

*Hen.* To have done that I ought to have been firſt convinced myſelf, which I was not, nor am I ſtill. I confeſs it is ſcarcely excuſeable to conceive, but it would be abſolutely inexcuſable unneceſſarily to declare, ſuch ſhocking opinions of any man; but your uncle's numerous vices, and depraved principles, rendered him capable of every crime; and the ſudden and uncommon manner in which all the ſons Lady Edmonds had borne, died in early infancy, while her children of the other ſex grew up ſtrong and healthful, gave dreadful cauſe of ſuſpicion.

*Har.*

*Har.* But it was only *cauſe* for *ſuſpicion*, and therefore ſhould not be allowed too great weight.

*Hen.* So reaſon dictates, but maternal tenderneſs ſpeaks in ſtronger terms. Conſider the ſituation of Lady Edmonds, married contrary to her inclination to a man ſo weak of intellects, that he could ſcarcely be ranked among the rational part of the creation (excuſe me though he be your father) whoſe ſtrongeſt ſenſation was ſomething between love, and fear of his brother, who thereby gained an unbounded influence over poor Sir Jeffery.

*Har.* I have indeed ſeen many inſtances of his power over my father, and have on ſeveral of thoſe occaſions felt the ſtrongeſt compaſſion for my mother.

*Hen.* Imagine then how great an additional diſtreſs, to one ſo diſagreeably ſituated, it muſt have been to ſee three fine boys expire before her face in ſo ſhocking a manner. To every mother it would have been terrible, but doubly affecting to her, who had no joy, no conſolation, under all the vexations ſhe endured, but from her children. There was ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect that their deaths were unnatural; one cannot wonder then if the tender, the wretched, the afflicted mother, thought there was ſtrong proof of poiſon.

*Har.* I allow that if ſhe erred, her error was blameleſs; but ſurely the moſt vicious man could not have a heart ſo ſavage, as thus cruelly to afflict ſo amiable a woman, for ſo diſtant a proſpect as my father's inheritances.

*Hen.*

*Hen.* I ſhould be ſorry if at your age you could more eaſily believe the poſſibility of ſuch atrocious wickedneſs; but it was her virtues that ſteel'd your uncle's heart to her ſufferings. His abandoned mind had but too ſenſibly felt the effect of her charms; and though in repreſſing his criminal hopes, ſhe had acted with a prudence and diſcretion, that the honeſt indignation of the virtuous reſentment renders difficult to be preſerved, yet it produced the moſt implacable hatred in him.

*Har.* This ſhocking circumſtance you never told me before.

*Hen.* Nor would I have done it now, as it muſt defile the mouth that utters it; but that the ſtrange impatience you have lately ſhewn, at being obliged to carry on a deceit to which perhaps you owe your life, induced me to hint at a circumſtance, that might render the neceſſity of your diſguiſe more credible.

*Har.* Indeed it does ſo, for there is no crime of which ſo abandoned a man might not be capable. But now that my childhood is paſſed, ſurely the whole might be made public without much danger.

*Hen.* One knows not to what dangers the reſentment of ſo bad a man might expoſe you, who hitherto accuſtomed to wield no more offenſive weapon than a fan, would be but ill qualified to oppoſe him. When we get into France, where you know Lady Edmonds deſigns in a few months to ſend you, your preſent garb ſhall be laid aſide, and

and the practice of more manly exerciſes will enable you better to defend yourſelf.

*Har.* The delay you talk of is an age to me. Muſt I be condemned for months to come to continue to wear all this female foppery, this feminine appearance?

*Hen.* Surely no man had ever before ſuch an averſion to womanhood. I wonder how many years it will be before you get into tolerable good humour with the ladies.

*Har.* Believe me it is not averſion to the ſex that occaſions my impatience to appear what I am. If I liked them leſs, I might be leſs tired of being a woman.

SCENE

## SCENE II.

*Enter Mrs.* HENBURY.

*Mrs.* HENBURY.

TIRED of being a woman! What, quarrelling with your petticoats ſtill?

*Har.* Yes, and ſhall do ſo till I get quit of them.

*Mr. Hen.* I leave you in good hands, ſo adieu. [*Exit.*

*Mrs. Hen.* Now was I your mother I would make you take orders, and condemn you to petticoats for life, as a proper puniſhment for your ignominious manner in which you treat ſo comfortable a part of dreſs. A pretty fellow, indeed, you are, to fancy it ſo mighty a diſgrace to bear the appearance of a woman.

*Har.* Why, my dear governeſs, I did not know you were ſo very tender on the ſubject, I have always ſeen you ſo obedient a wife, that I did not ſuſpect you were ſo very tenacious of the dignity of your ſex.

*Mrs. Hen.* When, with a grave manly appearance, and a hoarſe voice (a little through the noſe too to give it more ſolemnity) Mr. Henbury talks of the ſuperiority of man, the humble duties

ties of a wife, and the authority of huſbands, *(ſpeaking pompouſly and through her noſe)* I acquieſce quietly enough, and am contented to be conſidered as the weaker veſſel; but when a ſtrippling, with no more beard than myſelf, a complexion much fairer, and a ſoft effeminate voice, pretends to diſpute the ſex, it puts me paſt my patience.

*Har.* As for the beard, Mrs. Henbury, I truſt it will come in time; the fairneſs of my complexion I muſt charge upon you, who certainly with the help of the ſun might have prevented it; and depend upon it, if I can find one baſe note in my voice, I will not ſqueak in treble when I am allowed to aſſume the man.

*Mrs. Hen.* Aſſume the man truly! why, child, thou canſt yet but aſſume the boy. At nineteen fancy yourſelf a man! a pretty man indeed!

*Har.* Have I not been thought a woman above two years, and would you caſt an imputation of forwardneſs on your ſex, in pretending that I may not now be allowed to be a man?

*Mrs. Hen.* A meer chopping minor, nothing more believe me; ſcarcely eſcaped from the diſcipline of the ferula. Some few years hence I will allow you to be impatient under your diſguiſe, but ſurely the life of a woman of your age is amuſing enough to content you.

*Har.* It might be ſo, were I really a woman; but what amuſement do you think I can find in having ſoft nonſenſe whiſpered in my ears by a ſet of coxcombs? It might be diverting for once at a maſquerade, but a long continuance of ſuch folly

folly is abominably tireſome, as my vanity can find no gratification in compliments founded on ſo mortifying an error. It was but yeſterday that an impertinent puppy would kiſs my hand.

*Mrs. Hen.* I ſaw it, and you gave him ſuch a look, I was afraid you were going to knock him down. I wiſh you do not ſoon diſgrace yourſelf by ſome boiſterous robuſt action or other, for ſo delicate a form you certainly have ſome airs intolerably maſculine.

*Har.* I am glad to hear it with all my heart, for I began to fear that my dreſs had faſcinated my mind, as it ſeems to have done my perſon.

*Mrs. Hen.* You may baniſh thoſe apprehenſions, for it does not appear to have had any effects of that kind, witneſs your very warm attachment to Emilia. You frequently addreſs her with an ardor ſo very unfeminine, that I ſee the poor girl ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and from a ſecret impulſe, which ſhe cannot explain even to herſelf, avoid you with an air of timidity, in ſpight of the tenderneſs of her friendſhip.

*Har.* How is it poſſible that ſo ſtrong a paſſion as I have for her, ſhould be kept every inſtant under the reſtraint my dreſs requires? I am aſtoniſhed at the command I have over myſelf, in performing my part ſo well. Is it ſtrange that an affection ſo ardent as mine ſhould now and then break forth in expreſſions a little too warm for a female friend?

*Mrs. Hen.* I do not pretend to ſay it is very ſtrange, but it is very imprudent. Forward boys are

are always troubleſome, but you above all others, from the peculiarity of your ſituation; one might reaſonably have hoped you would not have taken it into your head to have fallen in love at nineteen.

*Har.* Surely there is nothing very unnatural in my diſappointing your hopes in that particular; but you elderly gentlewomen ſeem to imagine we are all to live to a Neſtorian age, and need not conſider ourſelves as men till the beſt part of our youth is paſt; but, my dear governeſs, ſuch ſlow proceedings are ill ſuited to us ſhort-lived mortals.

*Mrs. Hen.* You will loſe no time I ſee; but if you muſt be falling in love already, I think you may at leaſt wait patiently for a proper ſeaſon to ſolicit a return.

*Har.* So I ſhould, perhaps, if Sir Richard Luton would wait my leiſure, and ſtart fair with me for Emilia's favour; but will you promiſe me that while I am exerciſing the patience you preſcribe, he will not deprive me of all my hopes, by marrying my miſtreſs?

*Mrs. Hen.* No really, I make no promiſes that I have not the power to fulfil; but that you muſt leave to chance.

*Har.* What, leave the whole happineſs of my life to the direction of chance! No, no, be aſſured I will not do that ſo tamely, I will much rather diſcover the whole myſtery; no conſequences can ariſe equally fatal to my peace. Life is not worth my conſideration without my Emily.

*Mrs.*

*Mrs. Hen.* Very paſſionate, and very heroic, truly; but here ſhe comes; ſo pray deſcend a little to the ſtile of decent friendſhip, and female manners.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Enter* EMILIA *and* CAROLINE.

EMILIA.

WE expected to have found you on the walks, Harriet, but being diſappointed, could not deny ourſelves the pleaſure of ſeeking you at home.

*Har.* Had I known you had been there, you certainly would have found me; but as you are ſeldom abroad at this hour, I excuſed myſelf from accompanying my mamma.

*Em.* Your anſwer is very obliging to us, but we have juſt parted with ſome company that would not be ſo well pleaſed with it Your abſence has worſe effects than a rainy day; you cannot imagine what a rueful change it makes in the countenances of many of our beaux.

*Har.* I am glad of it, for any change muſt be for the better. But what is the matter with my Caroline? ſhe looks unuſually grave.

*Car.* I am not very well to-day.

*Em.* How could ſhe? can any girl be well, or well pleaſed, which is a good deal the ſame in appearance, when another woman robs her of her lover?

lover? But this is more than ſhe will tell you, ſhe ſpends ſo much breath in ſighing, ſhe has none to ſpare for converſation.

*Har.* You know not your own value, my Caroline, if you can think that man worth a ſigh who leaves you for another.

*Car.* Perhaps I once thought ſo, but you have taught me humility; you have ſo effectually mortified my vanity, that all the flattery you can beſtow will not revive it.

*Har.* Can you really imagine that Lord Leſſingham, by a little trifling gallantry, means to ſhew me any preference? It would prove an equal want of honour as of taſte, and I aſſure you I ſhould ſhare your concern if I believed it.

*Car.* His late behaviour to me has more fully proved the change in his ſentiments, than his publick addreſſes to you; but I ſee no reaſon why his love ſhould give you concern; ſurely to be the object of it is no misfortune.

*Har.* As to myſelf none at all, that little monoſyllable, No, is ſo eaſily ſaid, that I muſt be very lazy indeed to find any great pain in pronouncing it.

*Car.* As eaſily as it may be ſaid, I fancy it would be out of the queſtion in this caſe. Lord Leſſingham is not a man to be refuſed; your expectations may reaſonably run very high, but I ſhould imagine every view might be gratified in a marriage with him; he certainly does not deſerve to be ſpoken of in ſo ſlighting a manner.

*Har.*

*Har.* My dear Caroline, don't be angry; I would not offend you for the world; what ſhall I do to make my peace? ſhall I marry Lord Leſſingham? if you command it, you know, it is my buſineſs to obey; no one is more deſirous than myſelf of fulfilling the duties of friendſhip, of which compliance with their earneſt deſires is certainly one of the chief. Well then, do you inſiſt on my having him?

*Em.* Indeed, Caroline, your petulance almoſt deſerves ſuch a puniſhment; did ever a girl quarrel with another for expreſſing a diſinclination to rob her of her lover?

*Car.* I know not what I ſay. I cannot bear to hear him ſpoken of with contempt; and after all, of what conſequence is it to me whether Harriet marries him or no? ſhe has rendered him inconſtant, he is loſt to me, therefore it matters not who becomes his wife, ſince I have no longer any chance of being ſo.

*Har.* Deſpair is ſo painful a ſenſation, that if I were you, I would not admit it ſo very readily into my heart. Suppoſe Lord Leſſingham is guilty of a little *egarrement de cœur*; or what is ſtill more probable, ſuppoſe him actuated by more mercenary views, and that my ſuperior fortune gives ſuch luſtre to my natural charms, for I dare not but allow them great, leſt I ſhould otherwiſe be guilty of an unpardonable offence by affronting his taſte; ſuppoſe then that thus heightened, his fancy at preſent gives them the preference, may not a diſappointment in this view reſtore him to his reaſon?

*Car.*

*Car.* Perhaps it may; but I am not vain enough to think that reſtoring him to his reaſon is reſtoring him to me.

*Har.* If his heart were really touched with another paſſion your caſe would be deſperate, but I am perſuaded I have made no impreſſion there; he is aſſiduous, perhaps importunate, but he is not tender; he may be vain, he may be mercenary, but I do not think he is inconſtant; his heart does not correſpond with his behaviour.

*Em.* I wiſh for Caroline's ſake you may not be miſtaken; and I wiſh for my own, that you could produce at leaſt the ſame appearance of inconſtancy in Sir Richard.

*Har.* Do you indeed form that wiſh, my deareſt Emilia? or do you only from a conſciouſneſs of the ſuperiority of your charms, ſay this by way of defiance of my power?

*Em.* No indeed, I am moſt ſeriouſly ſincere, his addreſſes are too diſagreeable to me to give any gratification to my vanity.

*Har.* I wiſh then I could deliver you from them; but the only certain means is in your own hands: It is more than probable that whoever ſhould attempt to ſupplant you in his affections would be diſappointed; but I imagine a notification of your diſlike would at leaſt conſiderably abate the ardor of his purſuit; and though ſuch notification may not be very polite, it is at leaſt honeſt, and the

ſooner

ſooner made, the better both for him and yourſelf.

*Em.* Were there no impediment but my politeneſs, I aſſure you it would not hold out againſt my deſire to get rid of him, I had rather be as rude as a bear than not procure myſelf that relief: nor do I ſuppoſe I ſhould find much difficulty in diſguſting Sir Richard, were I not afraid of offending my father by ſuch a ſtep.

*Har.* Is it poſſible Mr. Martin can wiſh you to marry againſt your inclination? Why not try him at leaſt, and frankly tell him your objections?

*Em.* Can you imagine I have not done that already? But to what purpoſe has it ſerved? He will not even underſtand me, and affects to give a contrary ſenſe to every thing I ſay.

*Har.* But you ſhould ſpeak plainer.

*Em.* Have not you ſeen enough of my father to know that he never will underſtand any thing that is ſaid, but in the ſenſe moſt agreeable to himſelf? Were you to ſpeak with all the conciſeneſs and preciſion of an oath in a court of juſtice, if it contradicted his inclination he would conſtrue it into a direct oppoſite meaning; or ſeem to do ſo.

*Har.* I have obſerved ſomething of this kind in him in common converſation, but I did not imagine he would extend the whim to matters of importance.

*Car.* You miſtook him much, he is then only more pertinaccous in his ſeeming error.

*Em.* Out of a thouſand, I will give you one inſtance. Three years ago he ordered me to prepare to go and live with an old aunt, who wanted nothing but the curling ſnakes round her head, to render her a perfect image of one of the furies, in every other circumſtance her perſon might vie with them, and as for her mind and temper Alecto and Tiſiphone were mild and gentle virgins in compariſon to her.

*Har.* He admired her ſaint-like meekneſs, I ſuppoſe.

*Em.* You ſhall hear. Had he ordered me to expoſe myſelf to a triple diſcharge of cannon, I could not have been much more ſhocked. I intreated to be ſuffered to remain with him, I told him, how wretched my aunt's temper would make me; that I had rather labour for my bread through life, than live two years with her, though at the end of it I were to inherit all her wealth; but that I was certain the vexations I ſhould ſuffer from her, would bring me to the grave, much ſooner than age would conduct her thither. In ſhort I wept, and begged, and tried every means of ſoftening him, and what anſwer do you think he gave me?

*Har.* Told you, perhaps, that you did not know the value of money, that the purſe ought to be preferred to the mind, and that if the former was well filled, it mattered little whether the latter were at all at its eaſe, for that riches are far preferable to peace.

*Em.* No, that would not have ſuited his eſtabliſhed method. Emily, ſaid he, I am glad to

ſee

ſee that at your age you have ſo much good ſenſe and prudence. I had no doubt of your implicit obedience, for indeed I will never ſuffer a daughter of mine to diſpute my orders, but I was not ſure you would ſee ſo plainly the propriety of the meaſure. You obſerve juſtly, that though your aunt may require ſome compliances of you, which may not be perfectly agreeable in themſelves, yet they will be rendered ſo, by reflecting on the advantages that will ariſe from pleaſing her; for, as you ſay, the greatneſs of her fortune, if by your good behaviour you can ſecure it to yourſelf, will amply reward you for all the vexations you can undergo, were ſhe to live beyond the common term of mortality. Therefore the day after to-morrow, according to the promiſe I have given your aunt, you will ſet out.

*Har.* And you I ſuppoſe acquieſced without farther contention in the conſtruction he had put on your words?

*Em.* I certainly ſhould have done ſo, had I not inherited a grain or two of his *perſeverance*; without failing in due reſpect to him, I cannot call it by any other name.

*Har.* So then you did perſvere?

*Em.* I intreated him not to attribute to me an opinion ſo contradictory to what I really entertained, for that were the mines of Peru to be obtained by becoming the victim to my aunt's temper, the purchaſe would be too dear. To which he replied, with a look of ſuch compoſed and ſettled ſterneſs as made me tremble, Your ready compliance, Emilia, gives me pleaſure; it is as much a

proof of your good ſenſe as of your obedience; for were my Children to pretend to contradict my will, I could never forgive it; and ſhe who could heſitate in following my orders, ſhould not ſtay an hour longer in my houſe, nor ever be looked upon by me as my daughter; but, thank heaven! I have no ſuch trials, my children are all good and dutiful.

*Har.* I think my gentle friend ſcarcely carried her oppoſition farther.

*Em.* No indeed, I ſobbed out my thanks for my father's approbation of my conduct, as if it had been real, and hoped he would ever find me obedient to his will.

*Har.* And you went to your aunt?

*Em.* I did. But the good Lady having exhauſted her fund of ill humour, performed one good natured action, and that a laſting one, for ſhe died before I had been with her two months; and I ſo much abhorred the part I was made to act, that I was not ſorry ſhe left no will; for I would not have the views of ſuch people gratified, as will ſacrifice the liberty of their minds to the hope of wealth. My father had his ſhare of her fortune, which amounted to a very comfortable ſum; and at the ſame time ſaw that he had not gained one ſhilling by conſigning me over to ſlavery. An uſeful leſſon.

*Har.* By which, however, he does not ſeem to have profited much, ſince from the ſame kind of motive he inſiſts on your marrying a man you diſlike.

*Car.*

*Car.* It is much pleaſanter to give than to receive inſtruction, and the ſuperior, in whatever connexion, generally makes the diverſion according to his own taſte, and in that point alone chuſes rather to be the giver than the reciver. But in my father's defence, I muſt ſay that my ſiſter gives a very unſupported negative to his commands of accepting Sir Richard Luton; ſhe makes few objections to the man, but only ſays ſhe neither likes him, nor the ſtate of matrimony.

*Em.* I know not what you may think, Caroline, but I proteſt I cannot imagine two ſtronger objections, when united. If I liked the ſtate, in favour of it I might bring myſelf to endure the man; or if he had much intereſt in my heart, I ſuppoſe he would find no great difficulty in conquering a tolerable degree of repugnance to marriage; but when neither is the caſe, both promiſe to continue in full force.

*Har.* Is not there a ſtronger objection concealed in the inward receſſes of your heart? has no other an intereſt there? I fear ſome man more fortunate has made a deep impreſſion; and that even ſhould your father indulge you in your refuſal of Sir Richard, I ſhall ſee you in the arms of a happier——

*Mrs. Hen.* You need not ſee her there, Miſs Harriet, if your prudery will take offence at it; but pray how long have you been ſo prodigious a prude as to be averſe to the thoughts of a friend's marrying? [*Aſide to* Har.] Will you never learn caution?

*Har.* [*Aſide to Mr.* Hen.] I beg pardon [*aloud.*] It is not prudery, Mrs. Henbury, that makes me wiſh Emilia to continue unmarried, it is the tenderneſs of my affection for her: how little does a woman generally love her friends after ſhe has engaged in the various connexions of the marriage-ſtate? May I not naturally fear the loſs of that friendſhip, which is the deareſt thing to me in life.

*Em.* Believe me, Harriet, I do not think I can ever love any perſon ſo well as yourſelf. No heart can be more ſuſceptible of the friendly affections, but I never found it diſpoſed to what is called Love; you, and my Caroline, ſo entirely fill it, there is no room left for any other ſenſations; and perhaps the fear of being withdrawn from connections which conſtitute my happineſs, is the principal cauſe of my diſlike to marriage.

*Har.* How delightful is that aſſurance! Join with me, my Caroline, in thanking your lovely ſiſter.

*Car.* The greateſt part of the acknowledgments I believe ought to come from you; from you, who not only have robbed me of a lover, but I ſuſpect have pilfered from me a conſiderable ſhare of my ſiſter's affections.

*Em.* No, my Caroline, my heart can anſwer the demands of both. The only thing in which I am rich is in affection; my heart is an abſolute mine of tenderneſs, and never having had thoſe prodigious draughts made upon it, which you love-ſick girls are obliged to ſupply, I have more

to

to give than an hundred of your exhauſted hearts can repay.

*Car.* That I confeſs is true enough. But ſince you have ſuch abundance, why not beſtow a little of your ſtore on poor Sir Richard, and that would make the whole affair eaſy.

*Em.* One would imagine you think it as eaſy to give what is in one's heart, as what is in one's purſe; but though each may contain a treaſure, if my heart bears any reſemblance to a purſe, it is to one of thoſe that are made by way of puzzle; ſome art is neceſſary to open it, and Sir Richard has not yet found out the way; I even ſuſpect that for him it is the impenetrable ſecret.

*Car.* Perhaps marriage is the way. A heart ſo ſenſible as yours would ſcarcely refuſe ſome ſhare of affection, to one whom it was your duty to love.

*Em.* The experiment is dangerous; and to ſay the truth, not very promiſing. Reſtore the manners of the world to what they were an hundred years ago, and I ſhould be leſs afraid to venture. I can ſuppoſe that marriage might then be a ſtate of the greateſt happineſs, but folly and diſſipation have now rendered it far otherwiſe. Domeſtic life is nowhere to be found. The huſband indulges his vices, the wife ſeeks the gratification of her vanity: if he allows her a handſome pin-money, and ſhe does not give the world occaſion to ſtigmatize him with an appellation that men above all others abhor, they both, in their own opinion and that of others, perform all the duties of matrimony; though he ſees his wife ſeldomer

than his race-horſe, and ſhe takes leſs care to oblige him, or regulate her family, than to collect a croud of acquaintance, and form the parties for each card-table.

*Mrs. Hen.* A melancholy truth, Miſs Emilia; but is it poſſible that a young woman like you, born in ſo gay an age, and with beauty to entitle you to more than a common ſhare of faſhionable pleaſures, can wiſh to ſet us a century back in our manners; and rather become what would now be called a domeſtic drudge, than the object of general admiration and courtſhip?

*Em.* Upon my word, Mrs. Henbury, I think coquetry a greater drudgery than any domeſtic employment; and ſhould find a couple of hours much more agreeably ſpent in regulating my family, than in ſitting under the hands of the friſeur.

*Mrs. Hen.* Oh! that is only a neceſſary prelude; a diſagreeable one indeed, but the conſequences would reconcile you to it; what could you find in domeſtic life to equal the pleaſure of being admired by every beholder?

*Em.* The pleaſure of being beloved by every dependant; a return I might hope to receive from my endeavours to make them happy.

*Mrs.* Hen. Is there no gratification think you in the conſciouſneſs of being the ornament of every place where you appear?

*Em.* None in compariſon to what would ariſe from a conſciouſneſs that I had reſcued the orphan from

from diſtreſs, and made the widow's heart ſing for joy.

*Mrs.* Hen. But think how many hearts your beauty may enſlave?

*Em.* No, I had rather think my virtues had captivated my huſband's.

*Mrs.* Hen. Well, you have ſo much the better ſide of the argument, that I find I muſt give up the point; but I would not adviſe you to avow ſentiments ſo unfaſhionably right before many of your own ſex, you would become more odious to them than all their maiden aunts; the other perhaps would only ſigh to think ſo few women are like you; for many of them would not be ſorry if their wives would regulate their own conduct by ancient manners, while they themſelves lived up to modern cuſtoms.

*Em.* I ſhall not try how far they would approve my opinions; for I aſſure you, had there been a man in the room, I ſhould not have ſpoken them, as I might have been ſuſpected of a deſign to recommend myſelf; which would not have ſuited my pride.

*Car.* Though there was no doubt a better chance for a woman's being happy in marriage an hundred years ago than there is now, yet you muſt allow that the condition of a woman, who is now linked to an unworthy mate, is not ſo forlorn and deplorable as it was then.

*Em.* Really that is more than I can allow. I grant ſhe will probably not afflict herſelf ſo much

as ſhe then would have done; but it is better to be ſorrowful than criminal, which is now too likely to be the conſequence. An unhappy wife uſed to pine and grieve, but conſcious innocence ſoftens every ſpecies of diſtreſs; guilt is alone inſupportable. It is far better to weep the loſs of an huſband's affections, than to imitate his conduct, which is now too common, and is indeed the natural conſequence of the reigning diſſipation, and faſhionable morals.

*Har.* Oh! Emilia! how happy will be the lot of that man, who ſhall receive the hand that conſigns to him the ſole poſſeſſion of ſo valuable an heart!

*Mrs.* Hen. (So;——now for ſome paſſionate inconſiſtency.) The boy will make me mad; he will never be able to keep his own ſecret much longer. [*Aſide.*] Is it not time for you to drink your water, Miſs Caroline?

*Car.* I believe it is.

*Har.* We will attend you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE IV.

*Enter Lady* EDMONDS *and Mr.* HENBURY.

*Lady* EDMONDS.

YOU are ſo accuſtomed to be the repoſitory of all my vexations, that you will not be ſurprized when I tell you that a new diſtreſs occaſioned my deſiring you to follow me out of Sir Jeffery's room.

*Mr.* Hen. I could not be ſurprized at your Ladyſhip's communicating to me any uneaſineſs you are under, unleſs I had forgot the confidence with which you have for ſo many years honoured me; but I have reaſon to be ſurprized any more vexations ſhould befal a perſon who has already had ſo uncommon a ſhare, that one might reaſonably hope no new one ſhould be added.

*Lady Ed.* Oh! Mr. Henbury, how painful is deceit! however juſtifiable the motive? How wretched muſt thoſe people be whoſe lives paſs in a ſeries of falſhood and hypocriſy, ſince one deceitful action can thus imbitter all my hours!

*Mr.* Hen. You treat yourſelf too ſeverely, Madam, in calling that deceit, which was only a tender and prudent caution.

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* It is true, my motive, I truſt, was not blameable; and the conſequences are ſo dear to me, that I cannot wiſh it undone; yet I have thoroughly experienced, that no deceit is innocent, ſince it draws ſo many after it.

*Mr.* Hen. I hope I have a juſt regard to truth, but I think we ſhould carry the point too far, were we to ſacrifice a child to our ſcruples of concealing it from the hands of the aſſaſſin. If the evil you had to fear were not ſo great as that term ſhould ſeem to imply, neither have you quite concealed your child; you have only made a ſecret of its ſex.

*Lady Ed.* The joy I feel in beholding the child I think I have thus preſerved, would, I fear, incline me to approve the meaſure, were it more criminal; yet the deceit in which it has engaged me, and my continual fears of a diſcovery, have made me pay dearly for that bleſſing; and who knows how ſoon the truth may be diſcloſed, and ſtill greater misfortunes enſue than the loſs of my child in its infancy.

*Mr.* Hen. After heaven has ſo long ſeemed to bleſs our meaſures, why ſhould you apprehend it will at laſt deſert us?

*Lady Ed.* Every fear is awakened by a letter Sir Jeffery has juſt ſhewn me from his brother, who writes him word he ſhall be here to-morrow, and bring him the offer of a ſon-in-law, who will do honour to his family; he then proceeds to tell him that he has negotiated a marriage between Harriet and Lord Leſſingham, and promiſed his approbation;

approbation; in conſequence of which Lord Bruton, Lord Leſſingham's father, will accompany him here, to compleat the affair. Can you, my worthy friend, point out to me a means of getting clear of this engagement?

*Mr.* Hen. It is an unlucky one, I confeſs; but my pupil muſt act the part of a diſobedient daughter, and abſolutely refuſe Lord Leſſingham.

*Lady Ed.* But do not you ſee the dangers that attend that refuſal? I cannot ſuppoſe Mr. Edmonds ſo much a friend to a child of mine, that he would through affection endeavour to eſtabliſh her ſo greatly to her advantage, as this muſt appear; I am perſuaded, therefore, his only view is to remove her from her father, whoſe fondneſs for her I have obſerved, gives him no little umbrage. Not contented with the ſeeming certainty of inheriting his landed eſtate, he aims likewiſe at the perſonal. He knows his arts have ſufficiently deprived me of all the influence I might reaſonably have expected over Sir Jeffery; and does not doubt being equally ſucceſsful in creating ſome diſguſt in him towards his daughter, if he can remove her from his ſight. Diſappointed in that hope, he will take ſuch advantage of her refuſal as will anſwer the ſame purpoſe, and I muſt prepare myſelf to ſee my child excluded from the paternal manſion.

*Mr.* Hen. It is true, Mr. Edmonds can turn Sir Jeffery as he pleaſes, and ſhould his views be ſuch as you imagine, your fears may be too juſt; but the real ſex of the ſuppoſed Harriet, will render this circumſtance leſs alarming, than if it were in

fact

fact a girl, who was thus to be driven from her father's roof.

*Lady Ed.* I allow there is ſomething in what you ſay; that a misfortune is not quite ſo great as it might be, may alleviate it in a ſmall degree, but cannot entirely conſole us. It is now, you know, above a year that by his arts my two other daughters have been baniſhed our houſe, and all communication between them and me prohibited; it is true I have not exactly obeyed the command, but the ſhort interviews I have had with them, procured by ſtealth, have loſt their pleaſure in my fears of their being diſcovered. In their happy eſtabliſhment with worthy huſbands, I find my beſt conſolation. But this, my only remaining joy, to be deprived of him: the thought is inſupportable.

*Mr.* Hen. With me, or with his ſiſters, he will meet with affectionate protection.

*Lady Ed.* With his ſiſters it cannot be. He could not long remain with them without ſome ſuſpicions ariſing of his ſex; and though I have a very good opinion both of them and their huſbands, yet I cannot conſent to their knowledge of that circumſtance; a ſecret in ſo many hands would ſoon be no ſecret at all.

*Mr.* Hen. With me then let him be; you know that were he our own child, he could not be more tenderly beloved both by my wife and myſelf. My affection made me wiſh a leſs humble reſource for him; it is, however, a ſafe one.

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* But cannot be ſo long. You muſt have obſerved that his perſon will ſoon betray him. I hoped to have prevented that danger by getting him ſent abroad, on a pretence of ill health, and then finding others for keeping him there; but this cannot be done without Sir Jeffery's concurrence, as he takes good care that I ſhall not be able to ſupply him with any money. It would not even be in my power to defray the expence to which he would put you in living with you at your own houſe; and by going abroad your income would either ceaſe, or be ſo conſiderably leſſened by keeping a curate to officiate in your abſence, that it would not be a ſupport even for you and your excellent wife. Which ever way I turn my thoughts, nothing but difficulties and diſtreſſes occur.

*Mr.* Hen. Theſe are difficulties, indeed, againſt which I can at preſent ſee no remedy. But there is one conſolation; ſhould Mr. Edmond's diſcover the deceit, I think he dare not attempt your ſon's life, any means he could uſe againſt him, muſt at the age he now is, be too apparent.

*Lady Ed.* I hope ſo. I believe him too great a coward to uſe any means but the inſidious arts of the poiſoner, and that could ſcarcely be done now without imminent danger to himſelf; therefore I confeſs my fears of a diſcovery are chiefly on my own account, on whom it muſt bring both ſhame and ruin. I could allege no inducement for the concealment of my child's ſex, but the true one; and that would excite ſuch rage in Sir Jeffery, that I ſhould be driven out of his houſe

to

to beggary and infamy; for the diſtreſſed are always in the wrong. To be baniſhed from my child, to be reduced to poverty, would be hard trials; but the ſlanders, the calumnies to which I ſhould be expoſed, I confeſs I could not ſupport. Shame and infamy are the only things for which I could find no conſolation.

*Mr.* Hen. You ſhock me to a great degree. I know not how I myſelf could bear to ſee virtue and innocence like yours incur the puniſhment of guilt; and I verily believe ſuch an event would kill my wife; but while we endeavour to find out a means for avoiding ſuch evils, let us not terrify ourſelves too much with the poſſibility of their exiſtence, but hope there is leſs cauſe for apprehenſion than you imagine. Surely you muſt be under the peculiar protection of heaven. Though this world is but a place of trial, yet I think yours cannot be ſo ſevere.

*Lady Ed.* You are partial, my friend. Was I not too diſtruſtful of that protection when I engaged in deceit to ſave my child, who had a protector ſo powerful?

*Mr.* Hen. Beware of refining too much; exceſs of ſcrupulouſneſs is ſometimes the error of the moſt virtuous minds. Your fears were excuſeable, your motive laudable; we are not in the hands of a ſevere being who accounts our weakneſſes criminal.

*Enter*

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Serv.* The chaiſe is at the door, Madam, and my maſter is ready.

*Lady Ed.* I come directly. I muſt attend Sir Jeffery in his airing; do you, my good friend, conſider of what I have been ſaying to you, and determine on what you think the beſt courſe for us to take.

*Mr.* Hen. I wiſh the laſt part of your Ladyſhip's command were as eaſy to execute as the firſt. I ſhall certainly reflect very ſeriouſly on the ſubject of our converſation, but am much afraid it will not be to ſo much purpoſe as the exigence of the caſe requires. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE V.

### SCENE CHANGES.

*Enter Lord* LESSINGHAM *and Sir* RICHARD LUTON.

*Sir* RICHARD.

I Did not know you expected Lord Bruton here.

*Lord Leſſ.* Indeed I did not. When I left him he had no thoughts of ſtirring from Bruton-place this ſummer, except during the races at Newmarket. But he writes me word that he ſhall be here to-morrow, in order to conclude my marriage with Miſs Edmonds.

*Sir Rich.* What does your heart ſay to that, Leſſingham?

*Lord Leſſ.* Nothing very agreeable, I aſſure you. I admire and eſteem Miſs Edmonds very much; I am always well entertained in her company, but my pleaſure is very mental. I believe it is from the want of a certain inexpreſſible feminine delicacy and ſoftneſs, which are in my opinion eſſentially requiſite in a Woman, that her beauty neither charmes my ſenſes, nor captivates my heart. I am not ſure that my gentle Caroline is handſomer; I am ſure her underſtanding is by nature inferior,

inferior, and far leſs cultivated by education; but yet I cannot behold her with the ſame inſenſibility.

*Sir Rich.* Of that I have ſeen many inſtances, but of late they have ceaſed, and all your attentions are paid to Miſs Edmonds.

*Lord Leſſ.* But not voluntary. In my addreſſes to Miſs Caroline, I followed the dictates of my heart: in my courtſhip of Miſs Edmonds I obey the commands of my father, and that I aſſure you with a very painful reluctance. I hoped if I could diſcover any return of my affections in my Caroline, that I might obtain my father's conſent; but while I was waiting for ſome ſymptom of that return, (for my heart would have been ill ſatisfied had I vowed her hand to my rank and fortune.) I received a command from him to addreſs Miſs Edmonds.

*Sir Rich.* For a real lover you have, however, been uncommonly obedient.

*Lord Leſſ.* Not ſo very implicit as you imagine. On receiving his firſt letter I expoſtulated with him; and declaring I had no inclination to the Lady, intreated him not to inſiſt on my obedience. By the return of the poſt I received an anſwer, wherein he told me I might take my choice, either marry Miſs Edmonds, or relinquiſh all expectation of inheriting his fortune; for he ſhould no longer conſider me as his ſon, than whilſt I obeyed his commands.

*Sir Rich.* I never heard any thing ſo tyrannical; he might at leaſt have had patience to diſcuſs the point

point with you a little longer; ſo great a readineſs to threaten the diſinheriting of you, looks as if he had no real intention of that kind, only uſes it *in terorem*; for ſurely no father can think of ſuch a ſtep without pain, nor execute it without long provocation; eſpecially where a man's vanity muſt be ſomewhat attached to his title, however ſmall his regard to his ſon; and as he cannot deprive you of your hereditary honours, there is little danger he ſhould leave the Earl of Bruton in indigence.

*Lord Leſſ.* I have always conſidered it as a very fortunate circumſtance, that my inheritance of his title did not depend on his will; for could he diſpoſe of that with his eſtate, it is long ſince I ſhould have any chance for either.

*Sir Rich.* What can have occaſioned his great partiality to your brother James? It is certain no one elſe diſcovers any ſuperior merit in him.

*Lord Leſſ.* His merits with my father are chiefly negative; he has had the good fortune not to offend him.

*Sir Rich.* I did not know you had ever offended him.

*Lord Leſſ.* Faith not deſignedly; but when men in years will lead as gay lives as their ſons, their views may ſometimes claſh.

*Sir Rich.* What do you mean?

*Lord Leſſ.* You remember Kitty Coriton?

*Sir*

*Sir Rich.* Very well; nor have I forgot that you were one of the men who paid more than the whole fee-ſimple was worth, for favours that you ſhared with half the town.

*Lord Leſſ.* Very true; I am ſenſible ſhe was no friend to monopolies, however ſhe had her preferences, and I believe that moſt of the men who kept her were at firſt her real choice; and ſome perhaps had the good fortune to continue ſo for a month or two; whether my property were of ſo long duration, is not to the preſent purpoſe; but my ill-luck would have it, that while I was an open candidate for her favours, my father was privately purſuiug the ſame point; and, naturally enough, the girl gave the preference to the younger man.

*Sir Rich.* An ugly ſort of a rivalſhip; but Lord Bruton had more reaſon to quarrel with his age, than either with the girl who choſe well, or with you, if you were ignorant of his pretenſions.

*Lord Leſſ.* I knew nothing of the matter, till Kitty told it me, during the courſe of our connexion, on my mentioning my father's ſtrange and unpaternal behaviour to me; from her I learnt that he had offered her a much larger income than I gave her; but ſhe told him, that to make intereſt and pleaſure go hand in hand, had been always her practice, and ſhe could not in compliance with him divide two things ſhe thought ſhould be connected. He ſoon found to whom ſhe had given the preference, and has hated me ever ſince. I have been ſilent hitherto on this ſubject, in reſpect to him; for ſuch intrigues (perhaps) are not very defenſible in a young man, but in an old one they

they are inexcuſeable. That which in the ſon may be wrong, is doubly ſo in the father, and, what is apt to touch us more nearly, ridiculous. I ſhould not therefore have mentioned this to you, had not diſtreſs opened my heart, and my confidence in your ſecrecy been very great.

*Sir Rich.* You may depend upon it. For though the ſpirit of mirth is apt to tempt one to publiſh a ridiculous affair, yet I could find no pleaſure in laughing at a thing that coſts you ſo dear. Kitty was a fine girl, but faith ſhe was not worth the loſs of your eſtate.

*Lord Leſſ.* Not in my opinion, I aſſure you; if I do not think a virtuous, modeſt girl worth it, as appears by my giving up Miſs Caroline; you may ſuppoſe that a thouſand of thoſe profligate wenches, however handſome, could not, in my account, balance ſuch a loſs.

*Sir Rich.* A thouſand is a fine number, though, upon my ſoul you have imagined a noble ſeraglio, were it not that one could not maintain them without the eſtate, I believe I ſhould think you value the dirty acres too highly. You would not have made a good muſſelman, I ſee that.

*Lord Leſſ.* Not I faith. Though I ſhould be glad to marry my Caroline, and I ſuppoſe muſt marry Miſs Edmonds; yet I am not ſo fond of the nooſe as to wiſh for a plurality of wives. I ſee few huſbands who do not think they have had one too many.

*Sir Rich.* Then you are reſolved to obey the Earl?

*Lord*

*Lord Leſſ.* I cannot avoid it. If he would come to terms, I would gladly give up two or three thouſand a year for his conſent to follow the choice of my heart. But as the whole is at his diſpoſal, he would pay no great regard to ſuch a propoſition.

*Sir Rich.* I ſuppoſe not. But ſince he will chuſe a wife for you, I think you are fortunate in his having fixed on ſo fine a girl as Miſs Edmonds.

*Lord Leſſ.* I allow it; but yet I am hurt at the thought of marrying with indifference, a woman who ſo well deſerves to be loved, and who might engage the affections of any other man; and yet I fear will never receive any thing more from me than cold eſteem. I can reſpect her as a friend, but not be fond of her as a wife.

*Sir Rich.* You think her too learned, I ſuppoſe.

*Lord Leſſ.* No. As ſhe is not oſtentatious of it, that would be the objection only of a conceited coxcomb, who is angry at the unavoidable conſciouſneſs of his own inferiority; or of a ſupercilious pedant, who is mortified at ſeeing the underſtandings of the two ſexes approach nearer each other than his pride chuſes to believe. Unwillingly ſenſible that learning is his only merit, he wiſhes to have it thought attainable by very few beſide himſelf.

*Sir Rich.* Well, though you ſhould rank me under the firſt denomination, for to the latter I have no pretenſion; yet I muſt confeſs I ſhould not like a learned wife.

*Lord*

*Lord Leſſ.* Why ſo? you have learning enough to have little reaſon to fear ſhe ſhould deſpiſe you.

*Sir Rich* Suppoſe I have, there are other objections. I ſhould be afraid, that inſtead of ordering my dinner, my wife ſhould be feaſting with Epicurus; that, loſt in contemplation with Seneca or Socrates, ſhe ſhould neglect my children, and let confuſion reign throughout my family. In ſhort, I had rather my wife ſhould be an œconomiſt, than a philoſopher, and I would have her look after her family rather than tread with Plato in the empyreal ſphere.

*Lord Leſſ.* Meer common place. I as much wiſh my wife ſhould pay due attention to the care of her children and domeſtic duties as you can do, but I do not think learning the greateſt enemy to thoſe duties; at leaſt, if none neglected them, but from that cauſe, what domeſtic creatures would women be! Believe me, it is the love, I might almoſt call it the rage, for diſſipation, that renders them ſo little regarded.

*Sir Rich.* I allow that is the more common cauſe, but it may be ſo only becauſe few women can be learned, but moſt women may be diſſipated.

*Lord Leſſ.* And I queſtion whether it is not chiefly owing to their ignorance that they are ſo. It is difficult for a woman to acquire learning, but where education and inclination have concurred to give her that advantage, I reſpect it as much in her as in one of my own ſex. I am far from thinking it neceſſary for her; but a conſiderable degree of knowledge, in my opinion, is abſolutely

ſolutely requiſite to make her an agreeable companion, in ſo laſting a connexion as matrimony. Youth, beauty, and vivacity, are ſufficient charms in tranſient intercourſe, but they will not ſupply us with entertainment day after day, and year after year, through the tedious period of matrimony; yet their duration will fall far ſhort of the connexion. Youth and beauty depart together, and meer animal vivacity, or even wit, is apt to follow them, if it has had no ſolid baſis; or ſhould it continue, would become impertinent or ridiculous when thoſe charms are fled, which had the greateſt ſhare in rendering it pleaſing. I would wiſh to find in my wife a rational, entertaining companion, who ſhould not depend for her converſation on the trifling occurrences of the day; with whom my mind could find pleaſure, when time had robbed her of the means of charming my ſenſes.

*Sir Ricb.* Really a man muſt be very nice, who cannot endure to hear his wife talk on any topic, however trifling, in the very ſmall ſhare he has of her company.

*Lord Leſſ.* But that ſort of life is not compatible with my views; I hope to have a great deal of my wife's company, for I wiſh her to be a domeſtic being. I am ſenſible ſhe muſt have entertainments at home, or elſe ſhe will not chuſe to ſtay there, and on that account I would have her love reading. Were it even to have the bad effect you ſuppoſe, the conſequences are leſs pernicious than thoſe which follow diſſipation; for were the neglect of her family the ſame, yet that turn would not lead her into ſuch ruinous expences; want of œconomy might be ſupported; but

when it is accompanied by extravagance, what fortune can ſuffice? A woman muſt be very injudicious in the choice of her ſtudies, if ſhe is not frequently reminded by her books of the various duties of which ſhe ought to acquaint herſelf; ſhe cannot avoid thinking, and therefore muſt ſee the conſequence of neglecting them; but the hurry, the confuſion of diſſipation, leave no time for thought, they rob her equally of reflexion enough to know them, and of leiſure to practiſe them.

*Sir Rich.* One would imagine you think one or the other neceſſary. Our grandmothers could live without either diſſipation or learning.

*Lord Leſſ.* True. They ſtaid at home, becauſe they had nowhere elſe to go; but their lives, though reſpectable, and uſeful to others, were, no doubt, very frequently dull and inſipid to themſelves. But the manners of the world are changed; no woman has now that cauſe for keeping houſe; amuſements, and what are denominated pleaſures, continually offer themſelves, and invite her abroad; it is therefore not to be ſuppoſed ſhe will reſiſt their invitation, except ſhe finds ſome entertainment at leaſt nearly equivalent at home; her ſtate would otherwiſe verify the fable of Tantalus. Many of the duties of a wife are inſipid, ſome of them tireſome, and require being intermixed with pleaſure.

*Sir Rich.* If home amuſements could attach a woman to her houſe, modern education furniſhes her with many genteel ones, and ſuch as become her ſex. Muſic and drawing, for example, you will allow might be great reſources.

*Lord Leſſ.* To thoſe who have a true genius for them, I grant they are; but though every Miſs is required to thrum on the harpſichord, and ſcratch with a pencil, how very few are qualified by nature to make any proficiency in either, your own obſervation may ſhew you; to thoſe who can riſe to no perfection, inſtead of being a reſource, it is a torment, and as ſoon as mamma's authority ends, they lay it aſide. But ſhould their geniuſes be favourable, many are the evils which ſometimes ſpring from a great fondneſs for muſic; and as for drawing, it has one bad effect, it yields little improvement to the mind, and I ſhould be ſorry that my wife's principal merit ſhould lie in her fingers.

*Sir Rich.* Well, ſince your matrimonial ſcheme is ſo very ſober, I do not know but you may judge rightly. I cannot ſay I am quite ſo domeſtic; I ſhall like very well to have my wife ſtay at home, if ſhe will not expect me to ſtay with her; but there I muſt be excuſed. To marry is a duty I owe to my family and fortune; but as meer duty is a dull ſort of a thing, I will enliven, and ſweeten it a little, by chuſing a girl I like. I will make wedlock a pleaſure, not a ſacrifice; but ſuch it would be, were I to domeſticate.

*Lord Leſſ.* Upon my word Emilia is not much obliged to you; you would like ſhe ſhould live in a manner wherein you do not chuſe to accompany her. This way of thinking would not have ſurprized me had you been married a year; but I imagined that a lover thought before marriage his wife's company would be all-ſufficient for his happineſs.

*Sir Rich.* Nay prithee, Leſſingham, don't pretend to accuſe me of being a cold lover, you who can forego your miſtreſs on your father's command; the man whoſe love gives eaſy way to obedience, is certainly no very impaſſioned *enamorato.*

*Lord Leſſ.* I allow I ſhould make no figure in romance, but a poor one indeed in a modern novel; yet do not imagine my love is weak, becauſe it has not deprived me of my prudence. I would fight for my miſtreſs as furiouſly as *Amadis de Gaul*; in ſhort, I would do any thing but ſtarve for her, or what is ſtill worſe, ſtarve with her; for to ſee her diſtreſſed, would be the heavieſt part of my misfortunes. Either nature or cuſtom has diſqualified me for poverty. I have many faſhionable wants, and expenſive inclinations; and though the immediate pain of reſigning my miſtreſs will be more acute, I am ſenſible it will be leſs laſting than the evils of indigence.

*Sir Rich.* What love may have to ſay againſt this, I will not pretend to determine, but I am certain you ſpeak the dictates of reaſon. What does Miſs Caroline think of your proceedings? for a fine woman generally believes ſhe has an indiſputable title to be preferred to every other conſideration.

*Lord Leſſ.* Of this I can give no account; I fear ſhe will attribute my behaviour to inconſtancy, which vexes me extremely, as I would wiſh, at leaſt, to preſerve her eſteem; but I dare not tell her the cauſe, as either vanity, reſentment, or friendſhip for Miſs Edmonds, might tempt her to

to diſcloſe it; and there would be too great cruelty in letting that young Lady know the indifference of the man ſhe is to marry, which in honour, and in conſcience, I am bound to conceal, if poſſible, from her.

*Sir Rich.* But you do not conſider the good effects that might ariſe from her knowing it; it would probably induce her to refuſe you.

*Lord Leſſ.* I could not expect ſhe ſhould do that without telling the reaſon, and that would ruin me as effectually as if the refuſal came from myſelf.

*Sir Rich.* What can have occaſioned the prodigious intimacy between your father and Mr. Edmonds? a man who has rendered himſelf ſo infamous by his many vices, and who is ſo well known for a common ſharper, that he is every where, except at Lord Bruton's, treated with contempt.

*Lord Leſſ.* The connexion was firſt formed at Newmarket, and has ſince been continued at Arthur's; the man therefore is ſuch as might be expected from the places where the acquaintance was begun, and cemented.

*Sir Rich.* I know Lord Bruton loves play, but I thought he had too much ſenſe to engage with a man who will ſpare no arts to win, and can have nothing to loſe but what he has gained by thoſe arts; and I ſhould imagine his profits would ſcarcely ſuffice to ſupply his extravagance and profligacy.

*Lord Leſſ.* They are certainly not upon a par, money on one ſide, and art on the other, form but an unequal kind of an engagement; however, I have been told that Mr. Edmonds has a reſource beſides the gaming-table; I have heard that he gets from his brother, Sir Jeffery, at leaſt half the baronet's income.

*Sir Rich.* That is hard on Lady Edmonds; a woman who is plagued with the whole fool, and enjoys but half the fortune, has ſurely made a bad bargain.

*Lord Leſſ.* Her ſituation is indeed a melancholy one, if her excellent conduct, and the general eſteem it has acquired her, be not ſome conſolation; and after all it is but a melancholy one; the approbation of mankind is a good thing, if it can be obtained through any other means than misfortunes; but thoſe who buy it by great ſufferings, have, in my opinion, a dear purchaſe.

*Sir Rich.* Do you dine at Lord Gentle's?.

*Lord Leſſ.* I do, and ought now to be dreſſing for it, for it grows late.

*Sir Rich.* I am in the ſame caſe, ſo good morrow. I ſhall meet you there.

*Lord Leſſ.* Adieu. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE.

## SCENE VI.

### Mr. MARTIN's HOUSE.

*Mr.* MARTIN, EMILIA, CAROLINE.

*Mr.* MARTIN.

YOU ſeem ready to take wing. Where are you going, girls?

*Em.* To the ball, Sir; we only wait for Miſs Edmonds, to conduct us to our chaperon, Lady Betty Nelſon. Oh! here is my Harriet.

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* HARRIET.

*Mr.* MARTIN.

YOUR ſervant, young Lady; my daughters began to grow impatient. Perhaps you are more at your eaſe; I ſuppoſe you are ſure of your partner.

*Har.* No indeed, Sir, I don't intend dancing.

*Mr. Mar.* True, coquets, you have a mind to mortify your lovers; I ſuppoſe now, Miſs Edmonds, you hope to make Lord Leſſingham deſperate, and Emilia expects to ſee Sir Richard look very blank; but pray, Caroline, who do you intend to mortify?

*Car.* No body, I aſſure you, Sir; my intentions reach no farther than not to mortify myſelf. I am not in dancing ſpirits.

*Em.* [*Aſide to* Caroline.] My dear Caroline, your diſtreſſed countenance afflicts me; you are the picture of deſpair.

*Mr. Mar.* Upon my word, Miſs Edmonds, many girls in Caroline's place would feel ſome ill-will towards you: they would have flattered themſelves from Lord Leſſingham's aſſiduities, with the

the hopes of being the object of his attachment; but Caroline had more ſenſe; ſhe never conſidered them but as the idle addreſſes of a young man, who at theſe places muſt always have an object for his unmeaning gallantry; and never was in ſuch high ſpirits as ſince he became your lover. Did you ever ſee any girl look ſo contented and happy.

*Har.* I cannot ſay I perceive any great joy in her countenance. [Caroline *weeps.*

*Mr. Mar.* That is ſtrange want of diſcernment in you; why ſhe is the very picture of happineſs, only look at her.

*Har.* Indeed, Sir, this is cruel. Miſs Caroline has reaſon to be offended with Lord Leſſingham; and I wiſh, if he was determined to behave ſo little like a man of honour, that he had pleaſed to have choſen any one but me, for a pretence to make her uneaſy.

*Mr. Mar.* She uneaſy! I wonder, Madam, you ſhould chuſe to affront her with ſuch a ſuppoſition; and indeed to affront me; for I ſhould think myſelf diſgraced by a daughter who could be rendered uneaſy by any young trifling fellow whatever. But Caroline underſtands herſelf better; ſhe is plainly very glad that he has diſcontinued his addreſſes to her; ſhe has done nothing but dance, ſing, and laugh, ſince it happened; and you ſee is now in ſuch violent ſpirits, that ſhe chatters away enough to ſtun one, and deſigns dancing with the firſt man that aſks her, leſt ſhe ſhould be ſuſpected of ſo unpardonable a weakneſs as being uneaſy. I approve your reſolution, my

child, I had conſidered the neceſſity of it, and had not you thought of it yourſelf, I intended to have laid my commands upon you for that purpoſe, but your own good ſenſe ſaved me that trouble; it is a great bleſſing to have prudent children; thank heaven! my daughters always chuſe of their own free motion, whatever I ſhould otherwiſe order them to do. However, Caroline, don't over-fatigue yourſelf; I think you may, without being particular, ſet down one dance before tea, and another after tea.

*Car.* Indeed, Sir, I am ſo ill, that I feel it will be impoſſible for me to dance to-night.

*Mr.* Mar. You think then it would be imprudent in you not to dance every dance; really I do not ſee that; however, in that point, do what you find moſt agreeable to yourſelf. But if you are at all tired, I can ſee no reaſon why you may not forbear one or two dances, without its being taken notice of; eſpecially as people will ſee by your lively manner, and happy countenance, that your heart is perfectly at eaſe. I am glad it is ſo, for I abhor a love-ſick girl; ſhe is a deteſtable animal.

*Har.* Upon my word, Mr. Martin, you have a new art of conſtruction; do you always take words in the contrary ſenſe from what they are ſpoken?

*Mr.* Mar. My daughters underſtand me, Madam, and I underſtand them, that is ſufficient; as for your art of conſtruction, I know nothing about it; you are a learned lady, but I am not a learned gentleman; therefore—you may not find me qualified for your converſation.

*Har.*

*Har.* What a brute it is! My poor Emily deſerves a gentler father. [*Aſide.*

*Mr.* Mar. Well, I will leave you to your own way; but, Emily, I ſhall look in before the evening is ſpent, for I love to ſee you and Sir Richard dancing together; you are the beſt matched couple in the room; it is pity you muſt not dance together after you are married.

*Har.* But, Sir, Miſs Emilia has promiſed me her company to-night, and on that account has already refuſed dancing with Sir Richard.

*Mr.* Mar. Very true; as you ſay, Miſs Edmonds, there is no danger that ſhe ſhould refuſe her hand for one night, to a man who will ſoon have it for life. No, I did not ſuppoſe it. Emilia is not a ſort of girl for thoſe coquettiſh, ſkittiſh tricks.

*Har.* Lord! Sir, you are enough to make one mad: I tell you, Emilia has refuſed dancing with Sir Richard to-night; not ſuppoſing you concerned yourſelf about it; and you would not have her now deſire him to be ſo good as to aſk her again.

*Mr.* Mar. Right, Miſs Harriet, I ſee you underſtand the ways of lovers; if ſhe had refuſed him, as you ſay, it would have been to little purpoſe, for a ſmile, or a few civil words, would, without fail, make him renew the requeſt. Well, I ſhall peep in juſt to ſee you all jig about a little. [*Exit.*

*Har.*

*Har.* The provoking wretch! I declare I could beat him. Jig about, truly! he ſhall not ſee me jig about, I am ſure. The very name is enough to make one diſclaim dancing for life; I know I would forbear it for ever if I thought it would vex him. To make ſuch a fool of one! to pretend to miſtake words that cannot be miſtaken! intolerable.

*Em.* [*laughs.*] Your petulance, my Harriet, is admirable. I never before found any entertainment in my father's ſtrange temper; but diſagreeable as the ſubject was, I have had the greateſt difficulty to preſerve my gravity; I mean while I had the chief ſhare in his thoughts, for I confeſs his treatment of my poor Caroline wounded me to the heart.

*Har.* I was grieved to ſee her hurt by it; for otherwiſe it really deſerved only to be laughed at. After all, I don't know that Mr. Martin is a very inconvenient father. If he finds us ſitting ſtill in one corner of the room, what harm will that do, he will obſerve the livelineſs of our motions, and I ſuppoſe be able to tell us what dances we have called up.

*Em.* I am afraid he will not extend his pretended error ſo far.

*Har.* Oh! indeed, but he will, and extend it to more important matters too. You may ſafely enough refuſe to become Sir Richard's wife, for he will underſtand it as a conſent to marry him. I ſee but one inconvenience; he will, I ſuppoſe, call

call you Lady Luton, but the man's name may be endured; if Mr. Martin does not inſiſt on throwing the ſtocking, the reſt of his ſuppoſitions may be borne; at the worſt, you can but deſire him to throw his own ſtocking, at his own pillow, and to imagine that it is yours, and that he is performing the ceremony in your room.

*Em.* My father is not ſo obſtinate in his own miſconſtructions as you may imagine. The truth of the matter is this: he is by nature violently paſſionate; his underſtanding and heart are both too good (for I aſſure you he has a thouſand virtues) not to ſee that ſuch a temper is a great misfortune; and to prevent being enraged by oppoſition, he has fallen into this method of ſeeming to take it as an acquieſcence with his will; but if any perſon perſiſt obſtinately in an endeavour to make him underſtand them rightly, he loſes all command over himſelf, and breaks forth into ſuch fits of paſſion as are dreadful. I never ventured to carry matters ſo far as to be the object of it, for I think I ſhould die with terror. There are no lengths to which he might not go in thoſe hours of rage.

*Har.* Oh! I reverence his thouſand virtues prodigiouſly; but if I were connected with him, I would readily give up nine hundred and ninety-nine of them for a more placid temper. I think, however, there is no animal whoſe rage would be ſo dreadful to me, as marriage with a man I did not like. Yet, my Emily, cannot determine to refuſe her hand, where her father orders her to give it.

*Em.*

*Em.* I know not how the exigence of the caſe might rouſe my courage, if he had not more than my fear on his ſide; but diſobedience to a parent ——How could you excuſe that, Harriet. Suppoſe my caſe your own, ſuppoſe Sir Jeffery and Lady Edmonds ſhould command you to marry Lord Leſſingham, could you refuſe to obey them?

*Har.* I certainly could; and whatever they may command, I aſſure you I will never be his wife. Let us engage our words to each other, I, that I will never marry him, you, that you will never marry Sir Richard.

*Em.* I cannot enter into an engagement which I have not courage to fulfil, nor could juſtify myſelf for fulfilling.

*Har.* A parent becomes a tyrant when he requires his child to marry contrary to inclination.

*Em.* I feel I am formed to live under a tyranny, paſſive obedience was born with me, it is the natural bent of my temper; but, though neceſſarily a ſlave, I feel the weight of my bondage.

*Har.* Then break your fetters. I allow it criminal to do what a parent forbids, but there are caſes wherein it is excuſeable to reſiſt their commands, and moſt eſpecially in the article of marriage, on which the whole happineſs of our lives depends.

*Em.* I fear mine is not one of thoſe caſes, as I have no prepoſſeſſion in favour of any other man,

and

and can object no other fault to Sir Richard than that he has not found the means of pleaſing me.

*Car.* A very material one, I think; but I believe the greateſt part of the world would term caprice, a reſiſtance ſo founded. But you forget that Lady Betty will wait for us.

*Har.* Why, are we going to this ball?

*Em.* You know it was unavoidable: after ſhe has ſo often gone to oblige us, could we refuſe accompanying her when ſhe deſired it? At leaſt one of us muſt have attended her, and better be at the ball than be ſeparated.

*Har.* I ſhould think ſo, were we going to a dungeon.

*Em.* Upon my word, Caroline, I don't believe we ſhall have ſo great a compliment made us to-night. Bet let us go try our fortune. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## ACT II. SCENE I.

### SIR JEFFERY'S HOUSE.

*Enter Sir* JEFFERY *and Mr.* EDMONDS.

*Mr.* EDMONDS.

NOTHING can be more abſurd, more ridiculous, than my niece's oppoſition to a match ſo greatly to her honour and intereſt.

*Sir Jeff.* Indeed, brother, as I ſay, it vexes me mightily. I ſhould like to ſee my daughter in her coach ſtuck round with coronets, and to hear her called Counteſs of Bruton, and all that.

*Mr.* Ed. Oh! it will do credit to the family, and as your wife has not given you a male-heir, and your name muſt therefore drop; there is great conſolation in thinking it will however ſink into a noble one.

*Sir Jeff.* But my Lady did give me male-heirs; only you know, brother, I could not keep them; ſo that there, to be ſure, is not her fault.

*Mr.* Ed. I hope not. I am always willing to ſee Lady Edmonds's actions in the beſt light; but I wiſh there was no neglect in the caſe; women

men are ſometimes ſtrangely perverſe, and will even puniſh themſelves to mortify their huſbands. Her girls have grown up healthy enough, and boys have generally the ſtronger conſtitutions.

*Sir Jeff.* Why, look you, brother, if ſo be, that in caſe, I was ſure my Lady was in fault,—I would—get a divorce, brother, and marry ſome other woman who ſhould bring me male-heirs, and take care of them too, I can tell you that, for as I ſay——

*Mr.* Ed. Divorces are not ſo eaſily obtained, Sir Jeffery. Of all the faults a woman can commit, it is by one only that ſhe gives us that advantage; ſo we muſt content ourſelves without male-heirs, and find our conſolation in enobling at leaſt one of the female-branches.

*Sir Jeff.* Ah! but ſhe won't be enobled you ſee; Harriet ſays as how, that ſhe won't have Lord Leſſingham; now that there knocks it all on the head.

*Mr.* Ed. She ſays ſhe *won't!* and pray what is that to the purpoſe? I ſhould be glad to know which is the moſt proper, that you ſhould govern your daughter, or your daughter govern you.

*Sir Jeff.* Oh! as I ſay, to be ſure it is my part to govern, I muſt be wiſer than her, you know, I have lived longer in the world; beſides, I am her father, and all that.

*Mr.* Ed. Well, then I ſuppoſe you intend to inſiſt on her conſenting to this marriage.

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* Yes, yes; I will inſiſt, to be ſure; if you think that there will do.

*Mr.* Ed. No doubt but it will. A father muſt be very ſilly indeed, who will ſuffer his daughter to contradict any inclination of his.

*Sir Jeff.* Very true; it is very ſilly indeed; but there are very ſilly fellows in the world; have not you obſerved that, brother? Poor ſilly ſouls, one pities them.

*Mr. Ed.* Pity them! I laugh at them.

*Sir Jeff.* Why, ay to be ſure, they do make a body laugh, he, he, he. Then one feels ſo glad one is not one of them.

*Mr.* Ed. It ſhould ſeem as if your daughter thinks you are one of them, by daring to oppoſe your will.

*Sir Jeff.* What, my daughter think me a ſilly fellow! If I thought the baggage had that there impudence, but to think ſuch a thing, ſhe ſhould ſmart for it. Fancy me a ſilly fellow, truly!

*Mr.* Ed. It is not of much conſequence what ſhe may have thought hitherto, you will convince her of your good ſenſe, by making her marry Lord Leſſingham.

*Sir Jeff.* That I will. She ſhall marry him to-morrow, that's flat. As I ſay, ſhe ſhall marry him.——But ſtay, brother—let's ſee how I can make her—muſt not ſhe ſay, I will, at church? Now,

Now, if ſo be, as how, ſhe won't ſay, I will, may I ſpeak for her? will that do?

*Mr.* Ed. Not very well, I believe. But I can tell you how to make her ſay it herſelf. Aſſure her, that you will turn her out of doors, never ſee her face again, nor give her a ſhilling, if ſhe does not obey your orders, and marry Lord Leſſingham.

*Sir Jeff.* But ſuppoſe ſhe ſhould refuſe for all that, I could not bear to turn my poor little Harry out of doors, ſhe is the beſt child I have.

*Mr.* Ed. Oh, you will loſe her but for a few days; depend upon it ſhe will ſoon be glad to ſubmit; women have a thouſand wants for money; ſhe would not find it very pleaſant to live without any. In a very ſhort time ſhe will deſire you to receive her again on any terms; and then you will not only get a dutiful daughter, but ſee that daughter a counteſs.

*Sir Jeff.* Well, I ſhould like to be father to a counteſs, it is almoſt as good as being a lord.

*Mr.* Ed. Then you are determined to turn her out of doors if ſhe will not marry Lord Leſſingham?

*Sir Jeff.* I will tell her ſo; as I ſay, I will threaten her.

*Mr.* Ed. Oh! but you muſt reſolve to do it, for it is very poſſible ſhe will put you to the trial.

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* Well, ſhe ſhall bite on the bridle for a few days; but you are ſure that will bring her to ſubmit.

*Mr.* Ed. Certainly. If you do not tell my lady, that you intend it only for a trial; you muſt abſolutely make her believe you diſcard your daughter for ever. Women are ſtrangely artful and cunning, and always want to govern their huſbands; Lady Edmonds would be very unlike other wives, if ſhe had not rather forego any pleaſure or advantage, than not to govern you; and if ſhe knew what you intend, would encourage your daughter to hold out, only for the triumph of getting the better of you.

*Sir Jeff.* Well, I will not let her into the ſecret, though it would not ſignify, for you cannot think me ſuch a fool as to be governed by my wife; no, no, I am a man, I am a Lord of the creation; and I take ſuch care not to be governed, that I always contradict every thing my wife ſays, and act contrary to every thing I ſee ſhe wiſhes, juſt as you bid me do. So I know how to govern, you ſee. Women are ſilly creatures, brother, ſad ſilly creatures, I know not what would become of us, if ſo be that in caſe we were to be governed by them. But my wife, I muſt do her the juſtice to ſay, knows that I am wiſer than her, and that I am her lord and maſter, for ſhe never pretends to contradict or oppoſe me.

*Mr.* Ed. And hopes, through that very compliance, to govern you.

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* She is diſappointed in that there hope though. You have warned me well againſt that; but if ſo be you had not, my own ſenſe, and underſtanding, and all that, would have ſhewn me the danger; and the more ſhe complies, the more I contradict her; and the better humoured ſhe is, the croſſer I am; not but it often goes againſt me, till I think of your good advice.

*Mr.* Ed. [*Aſide.*] A ſweet huſband, truly! Of what materials can that woman be compoſed, who can uniformly act like Lady Edmonds to ſuch a mate? But curſe her! ſhe deſerves to ſuffer.—— Well, brother, you will carefully ſtick to your point. I think, therefore, you cannot do better than ſend for my niece directly; and lay your commands upon her.

*Sir Jeff.* I will then. [*Calls.*] Jonathan, tell your Lady and Harriet to come to me. I think my wife may help us; for though, as you ſay, ſhe may love to croſs me, yet if ſo be ſhe finds, that in caſe Harriet is obſtinate, ſhe muſt loſe her, that there will make her try to bring her ſpirit down.

*Mr.* Ed. Poſſibly it may; and I imagine ſo noble an eſtabliſhment muſt flatter any mother's vanity.

SCENE

## SCENE II.

*Enter* Lady EDMONDS *and* HARRIET.

Sir JEFFERY.

COME hither, Harriet; come hither, child; I ſent for you to tell you once for all, that I will have you marry Lord Leſſingham, aye, and that in a few days—to-morrow, if I pleaſe.

*Har.* Dear Sir, I only beg——

Sir *Jeff.* No, no, no begging, do as I bid you, or you may beg indeed; tell me at once, flat and plain, that you are ready to marry him, at that there time that I ſhall think proper, or you are no child of mine.

*Har.* Let me beſeech you, Sir——

Sir *Jeff.* I will have no beſeeching, I tell you, beſeeching is as bad as begging; I will ſee you a great lady; and great ladies neither beſeech nor beg: do they, brother?

Mr. *Ed.* I am ſure, when my dear niece reflects ſeriouſly on the duty ſhe owes to her father, ſhe will no longer make any oppoſition to his commands. And a woman of Lady Edmonds's exemplary piety, muſt have inſtilled into her daughter's

ter's mind, too ſtrong a ſenſe of the duty of filial obedience, for it to fail on the firſt trial.

Lady *Ed.* I have at leaſt a very ſtrong ſenſe, Sir, of the favour you intend me by that compliment; but I muſt tell you, that, whatever endeavours I have uſed to teach my daughters the duty of filial obedience, I never taught them they were to be implicit ſlaves. Every connexion has its reciprocal duties.

Mr. *Ed.* By your ladyſhip's care, then, Miſs Harriet may very well underſtand the duty of a father, however ignorant ſhe is of the duty of a daughter.

Sir *Jeff.* Duty of a father! what would ſhe have me dutiful? very fine, truly! I! Sir Jeffery Edmonds, dutiful! I know better things; as I ſay, it is wives and daughters that are to be dutiful, what have I to do with duty! I am no woma n

Lady *Ed.* Dear Sir Jeffery, you entirely miſtake the meaning of my words.

Sir *Jeff.* Oh! to be ſure! I miſtake! I am a fool, I ſuppoſe, ha, is that your meaning? You ſhall ſee though, that I have more ſenſe than all you women put together; for I tell you flat and plain, that if Harriet does not conſent to marry Lord Leſſingham, I will never ſee her face again, nor you neither, madam. Do you hear, Harriet, ſay Yes, this minute, or I turn you out of doors directly, you may go ſeek your fortune where you will; you may then go about begging and beſeeching, and ſee what you will get by it. I be dutiful,

dutiful, truly! you ſhall now ſee who muſt be dutiful. Why don't you ſpeak?——

*Har.* What can I ſay, Sir?

Sir *Jeff.* Why, *Yes*, to be ſure, that is not ſuch a very hard word, I think.

*Har.* Indeed, Sir, I find it the moſt difficult word to pronounce on this occaſion, of any in the whole language.

Sir *Jeff.* There now, you found it ſo hard a matter to ſpeak, and there have you ſpoken twenty times as much as I deſired.

Mr. *Ed.* Really, niece, your oppoſition ſurpriſes me; to refuſe one of the prettieſt young noblemen in England, with ſo good a fortune, is unaccountable. But as you are averſe to it; I am ſorry my brother's honour is ſo deeply engaged, that the match is unavoidable: had it not been for the tender affection I bear my brother and Lady Edmonds, and the fondneſs I have for you, however great the eſtabliſhment, I ſhould not have concerned myſelf in it; and I am very unhappy that my good intentions ſhould occaſion any uneaſineſs in the family.

Sir *Jeff.* Oh! you are the beſt of brothers! ſo kind, ſo careful of me; and here are you quite a father to my child; and yet there ſhe ſtands pouting, when ſhe ought to be on her knees, thanking you for all your goodneſs. Why don't you, huſſey?

*Har.*

*Har.* I defer thoſe thanks, Sir, till I have a due ſenſe of the obligation.

Mr. *Ed.* Don't talk of it, I don't love to be thanked; when I ſerve a friend, I am ſufficiently rewarded by the conſciouſneſs of having conferred a benefit; I deſire no return from my dear niece, but to ſee her properly obedient to her father.

Sir *Jeff.* That is true; that's the beſt return; ſo, Harriet, do ye hear, conſent to this match at once, or get out of my houſe.

Lady *Ed.* Dear Sir Jeffery, let me prevail with you to allow her a little time to determine: this affair has come upon her ſo ſuddenly, ſhe has had no leiſure to conſider it properly; reflection on the advantages it offers her, and a little longer acquaintance with Lord Leſſingham, may reconcile her to it. My dear Sir Jeffery, let me prevail with you thus far.

Sir *Jeff.* No, you ſhall not prevail with me, you know you never do prevail with me; a wife prevail over her huſband, truly! a fine paſs indeed we ſhould come to, if in caſe wives were to prevail over their huſbands! Brother, did you ever hear the like?

Mr. *Ed.* If my partial regard for Lady Edmonds makes me too deſirous of obliging her, brother, you muſt excuſe me; but I cannot forbear joining in her requeſt, and begging you will give my niece ſome hours to conſider of it; I dare anſwer, that a little reflexion will bring her to reaſon; allow her till the afternoon to determine.

Sir *Jeff.* Well, to oblige you, brother, though as I ſay, you are too good, you bachelors don't know how women ſhould be dealt with, but to oblige you, I will give her till the afternoon to conſider of it.

Lady *Ed.* Till the afternoon! what can be expected from ſo ſhort a delay? I think, Mr. Edmonds, the very partial regard you ſpeak of might have induced you to have aſked for a longer reſpite.

Mr. *Ed.* I would have done ſo, madam, had I not been ſure, that if I ſolicited a longer delay, my brother would have granted none at all.

Sir *Jeff.* You are in the right, brother, no more I ſhould; not I.

Mr. *Ed.* My chaiſe is at the door, Sir Jeffery, ſhall I have the pleaſure of carrying you your airing, and we will leave Lady Edmonds to bring her daughter to reaſon. I cannot doubt the ſucceſs of her ladyſhip's eloquence.

Lady *Ed.* [*Aſide.*] Inſulting wretch!

Sir *Jeff.* With all my heart, I am ready to attend you.

Mr. *Ed.* [*Aſide.*] Now muſt not I loſe ſight of him an inſtant, till this affair is decided.

[*Exeunt* Sir Jeff. *and* Mr. Ed.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Enter Mr. and Mrs.* HENBURY.

*Mr.* HENBURY.

PARDON our impatience to know what has paſſed.

*Lady Ed.* Oh! my child, what will become of thee!

*Har.* An inſolent raſcal! if I had had a cane in my hand, I could not have forborne to exerciſe it upon him. With what barefaced impudence he impoſes on my poor father, without even having the decency to attempt to conceal it from us! I wiſh I had had a cane.

*Mrs. Hen.* Pray who is it you ſo much wiſh to have favoured with it.

*Har.* That vile raſcal my uncle.

*Mrs. Hen.* Well, I think I could not have quarrelled with you for belying your petticoats on ſuch an occaſion. I could have been contented to have ſeen you acting the Thaleſtris, if you had beat him thoroughly. You would have made a graceful Amazon. And the free uſe you make of the term, raſcal, would have better ſuited your maſculine, employment than your habit.

*Har.* A truce with your delicacies, my dear Mrs. Henbury; this is no time for frivolous attentions. My father inſiſts that I ſhall this afternoon either give my word, that I will marry Lord Leſſingham, or leave the houſe and ſeek my fortune.

*Mrs.* Hen. This your ladyſhip foreſaw.

Lady *Ed.* But of what uſe to foreſee it, except I could at the ſame time have found the means of preventing it! What will become of my child!

*Mrs.* Hen. Is he not our child too? Our humble roof was long honoured by his living in it, and it is ſtill more his than ever.

*Har.* My dear Madam, I am ſenſible of your goodneſs, but ſhould be inexcuſable in ſuffering myſelf to become a burden on you. To be ſeparated from the beſt of mothers, and from you my dear foſter-parents, is my chief concern. The diſtreſs of a young woman ſo circumſtanced would indeed be dreadful; but a man need never be diſcouraged, he has the world to buſtle in, and may carve his own fortune.

Lady *Ed.* Oh! my dear, diſtreſs reaches every ſex. Every means of gaining a ſupport requires preparatory exerciſe and ſtudy; you are qualified for none.

*Har.* The army is a reſource for thoſe who are moſt deſtitute of uſeful acquirements.

Lady

Lady *Ed* It would indeed be one, were it poſſible for you to obtain a commiſſion, but that you ſee cannot be done; and to be the ſlave of inſolent officers, and the companion of the moſt profligate of mankind; for ſixpence *per* day is inſupportable.

*Har.* It is indeed worſe than ſtarving. But a very different buſineſs offers itſelf. Surely I have not profited ſo little by Mr. Henbury's inſtructions, as not to be qualified for ſome of the emoluments of literature; though my perſon has been tended with feminine delicacy, yet my mind has been educated in a manner ſuitable to my ſex.

Mr. *Hen.* I ſhould not do you juſtice, were I not to ſay, that from your unwearied application, and uncommon quickneſs of parts, you have acquired more learning than any young gentleman of your age, I ever met with, notwithſtanding the far greater opportunities afforded them, by the more advantageous method of their education. But learning is leſs lucrative than you imagine. All who have attempted to live by it have found it ſo; an unknown author is little regarded; were you known, your youth would diſcourage bookſellers from engaging with you; but what is ſtill more important, you might be diſcovered, and in what troubles might not that involve Lady Edmonds!

*Har.* There indeed you have ſilenced my vanity, and my ambition. I might perhaps have flattered myſelf with hopes of better ſucceſs than you imagine, but nothing could repay me for the painful apprehenſions of increaſing the afflictions

of my dear mother. For a thouſand worlds I would not involve her in new diſtreſſes.—Let me ſee—why ſhould I not enter as a volunteer in the Ruſſian ſervice, and fight againſt the Turks?

Lady *Ed.* For heaven's ſake do not mention ſuch a thing, the very thought is enough to kill me.

Mrs. *Hen.* A fine way indeed of avoiding to give pain to your tender mother. The boy's head runs on nothing but fighting. Becauſe you have not yet been a man, you now want to be a hero, I ſuppoſe. A little experience will teach you, that men are not ſo fond of expoſing themſelves to dangers.

*Har.* But what courſe can I follow then?

Mrs. *Hen.* That is not the point now to be ſettled. Let things turn out the worſt that can be, you can calmly conſider this matter over at your leiſure at our houſe. The buſineſs now is to get as well as you can off this cruel alternative. Suppoſe you ſhould try Lord Leſſingham's honour, tell him your averſeneſs to the match, and the threatened conſequences of your refuſal, and beg him to ſave you from ruin, by declining it.

Lady *Ed.* Do ſo, my dear; if he has either ſenſe or honour he will take it on himſelf.

*Har.* I am ready to follow your advice, but I own I have no hopes from it. I am convinced Lord Leſſingham does his own inclination violence in conſenting to the match; his motives therefore muſt be very ſtrong: if they can conquer his love for

for another woman, can I expect them to give way to a generous compaſſion for me?

Lady *Ed.* The probability indeed does not appear great, but it is our only reſource.

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Serv.* Lord Leſſingham, madam, is come to wait on you.

Lady *Ed.* Shew him up. This happens very opportunely; we will leave you, that you may at leaſt make the attempt.

[*Exeunt Lady* Edmonds, *Mr. and Mrs.* Henbury.

## SCENE IV.

*Enter Lord* LESSINGHAM.

*Lord* LESSINGHAM.

I HOPE, madam, I do not intrude unſeaſonably.

*Har.* No, my lord, you could not have found a time when I more wiſhed to ſee you.

*Lord Leſſ.* I ſhall eſteem myſelf very happy, if there is any time when you can ſee me with pleaſure. You have hitherto given me little reaſon to flatter myſelf with a poſſibility of finding that fortunate minute; yet, ſhould it not arrive, how unhappy muſt the remainder of my life be! An union, that might beſtow on me the higheſt felicity, may, by your indifference, be rendered my greateſt misfortune.

*Har.* Believe me, my lord, an union with me would indeed be your greateſt misfortune, but you ſhall never incur it. Even paternal authority has not ſufficient power to make me conſent to be your wife: that you ſhall never have my hand, may well conſole you for not poſſeſſing my heart.

*Lord Leſſ.* Is any thing in nature an adequate conſolation for being rejected by you? I plead no juſt title to your affections, but might I not preſume

ſume to hope, that I ſhould not be the object of your averſion? I claim no merit, but how have I been unfortunate enough to offend you ſo very much, that a father's commands cannot obtain my forgiveneſs?

*Har.* My lord, the affair between us is grown ſo ſerious, and carried on with ſo much precipitation, that conciſeneſs and ſincerity are become neceſſary; if therefore I ſpeak more plainly than politeneſs will warrant, let the deſperateneſs of our ſituation plead my excuſe. You are by no means the object of my averſion; I ſhould with pleaſure cultivate your acquaintance, nay even your friendſhip. You have never offended me, becauſe I am well perſuaded you have not loved me.

*Lord Leſſ.* Not loved you! How little you know my heart, or your own charms, if you can doubt my love! I proteſt——

*Har.* No proteſting, I beſeech you; if I do not believe your aſſurances, it would only ſerve to give me a bad opinion of your veracity; and if I did believe them, I ſhould think you not only unworthy my affection, but even of the ſmalleſt regard. I am not ſufficiently acquainted with the wretched ſophiſtry of love, to ſay what it might ſuggeſt to me in your defence, were you the object of my affection; but as you cannot be ſo, I would wiſh to eſteem you, and therefore muſt deſire you to forbear the ſubject. It is a great pleaſure to me to know that I owe your addreſſes to Lord Bruton's commands; you obey your father, and not your heart; but my reſolution of not marrying you, does not proceed from this knowledge; if you loved me more than ever man loved woman,

my reſolution would be the ſame; no power on earth could force me to become your wife.

*Lord Leſſ.* What can I urge, when you have told me that my love would be an offence?

*Har.* Nothing, till you have heard me farther. You no doubt are not ignorant, how obſtinately my father inſiſts on my compliance; but you cannot know that he has poſitively declared, that if I do not conſent before this day is expired, to marry you, he will diſcard me for ever. Were my father left to the direction of his own actions, theſe menaces would be leſs terrible, the paternal heart might melt, but my uncle will take care to keep him ſteady to this cruel reſolution.

*Lord Leſſ.* Am I ſo much the object of your hatred, that you will venture to incur ſuch a ſentence, rather than marry a man, who will make it the whole ſtudy of his life to render yours happy?

*Har.* Hatred, as I have already told you, is out of the queſtion. Believe me, I make no idle declaration, when I aſſure you, I will not, I cannot marry you. What I have more to ſay, is only this, if you have not generoſity enough to extricate me out of this difficulty, my ruin is inevitable. Diſtreſs and poverty muſt be my portion through life; deſtitute of ſupport, deprived of parental protection, thrown into a dangerous world, unfriended and diſgraced, what complicated wretchedneſs awaits me! By continuing your addreſſes, you incur a ſhare of the guilt; you are even the principal agent in my ruin.

*Lord Leſſ.* You diſtract me. What can I do?

*Har.*

*Har.* Refuſe to marry me. The advantages of the union are ſo much on my ſide, that Lord Bruton cannot be ſo ſtrongly intereſted in it, as my father might reaſonably be, even if he were freed from my uncle's influence; Lord Bruton may be diſpleaſed, but he cannot be highly offended; and will you not expoſe yourſelf to a tranſient fit of diſpleaſure, to ſave an innocent perſon from ruin?

*Lord Leſſ.* How your uncle has contrived to make my father as abſolutely bent on this alliance as yours can be, I know not; but certain it is, that my refuſal would be attended with the ſame conſequences to me. I have too much reaſon to fear that he would even be glad of an excuſe to diſinherit me. Since then, my dear madam, you ſee that our ſituations are equally deſperate, why will you not conquer your reluctance, and accept me as the leaſt evil that is within your choice. I will patiently ſupport your indifference, till by affectionate aſſiduity I have conquered it; I will endeavour by every means to gain your heart; and if I cannot ſucceed, will attribute my unhappineſs to my own demerits, without reproaching you, or reſenting your unconquerable averſion.

*Har.* Such a conduct as your lordſhip promiſes would be extremely generous; and though it would not be ſo eaſily preſerved as you may imagine, yet in ſo dreadful an exigence, were it poſſible, I ſhould think it prudent to make the experiment, however dangerous; but, I muſt again repeat, it is impoſſible I ſhould marry you. Neither averſion, nor any other thing that might be removed or controlled, is the impediment, it is ſuch as muſt ever be unconquerable; but ſecreſy is of ſo great importance

importance to me, that I am ſure your lordſhip will excuſe my not explaining it more fully; and ſince there is no means of ſaving me from ruin, I muſt acquieſce under it, and endeavour to ſupport properly a fate that is inevitable.

*Lord Leſſ.* No, madam, if one of us muſt be undone, I am the proper perſon: a man has at leaſt fewer evils to ſtruggle with; and rather than you ſhould be expoſed to diſtreſſes, which the ſoftneſs of your ſex renders you ſo little able to bear, I will immediately declare an inſuperable objection to our marriage, and expoſe myſelf to thoſe effects of my father's anger, which have hitherto had, perhaps, too great influence over me. I ſhall thus ſave a woman whom I highly eſteem and regard, and puniſh myſelf for my weak attachment to fortune; but he who has ever been lulled in the lap of luxury, has certainly not been bred in the ſchool of philoſophy. This conſideration may beſt excuſe me.

*Har.* Stay, my lord, the nobleneſs of your mind charms me; but do not imagine I will ſuffer you to effect your purpoſe. I will not through your ruin eſcape my own. I will, as juſtice requires, take the refuſal on myſelf, and to prevent your generoſity from leading you into any danger, I ſolemnly declare to you, that no meaſures you could take ſhould prevent my declaring, that all the oppoſition is on my ſide; therefore, by any attempts you can make, you will only increaſe the evil. Had only a ſlight and tranſient inconvenience been the conſequence of your breaking off the marriage, I ſhould have gratefully accepted the obligation; but as the danger is equal to both, the alternative will not admit of the leaſt heſitation.

Lord

Lord *Leſſ.* It grieves me extremely, madam, to think I am in any manner made the cauſe of diſtreſſing you, and the greateſt obligation you can confer on me, is, to put me in ſome way of alleviating the misfortune I have ſo unfortunate a ſhare in bringing upon you.

*Har.* My thanks are all the return I have in my power to make you for ſo obliging an offer; but I beg you will not conſider yourſelf as in any degree accountable for what I may ſuffer, as you are entirely guiltleſs in it; for I am perſuaded, had not paternal authority, armed with all its terrors, influenced you, Miſs Caroline Martin would have had no cauſe to charge you with inconſtancy.

Lord *Leſſ.* I don't deny, madam, a due ſenſe of Miſs Caroline's charms. I knew her before I had the pleaſure of ſeeing you, and———

*Har.* Upon my word I did not mean to put you to the perplexity of inventing an excuſe; I never was ſo fooliſhly vain as to imagine I had a right to every man's heart; and that vanity muſt be great indeed, that diſtreſs does not ſilence; therefore you may ſafely believe, that nothing can hurt you ſo much, in my opinion, as a ſuppoſition of your being inconſtant, even in favour of myſelf; but I do you more juſtice; and hope to ſee you expiate the reaſonable offence your late neglect muſt have given her, by the moſt affectionate aſſiduities.

Lord *Leſſ.* My father's preſence, madam, does not allow me liberty to obey your commands. He will enquire the reſult of my viſit to you; what ſhall I tell him?

*Har.* The truth; that I am determined never—but who is here?

SCENE

## SCENE V.

*Enter Lord* BRUTON *and Mr.* EDMONDS.

*Mr.* EDMONDS.

I AM afraid, my lord, we are impertinent intruders; lovers do not eaſily forgive an interruption. Miſs Harriet, Lord Bruton (introducing him) I need not perform the counter-part of the ceremonial to your lordſhip.

Lord *Bru.* It is abſolutely unneceſſary, Sir, the young lady's beauty leaves me no room to doubt its being Miſs Edmonds. My ſon, madam, is certainly the happieſt fellow in the univerſe; I ſhould think myſelf fortunate in the approaching connection, if I did not envy the dog the more delightful relation which he will bear to you.

*Mr. Ed.* Still gallant, my lord.

Lord *Bru.* Who the devil can be otherwiſe in the preſence of ſo fine a woman? Upon my ſoul ſhe might awaken paſſions buried in the grave of fourſcore. I aſſure you, fair lady, if I could flatter myſelf that the younger man has not a better chance for your favour, I ſhould become my ſon's rival.

*Har.* Were my ſpirits as gay as your lordſhip's, I ſhould be better able to anſwer you, but really you are too young for me.

Lord

Lord *Bru.* That is a compliment for which I muſt thank you on this fair hand. Nay, I poſitively will kiſs it; you are the ſovereign of my ſoul, and I muſt ſwear allegiance on it. I would take any oath you could exact, if I might ſeal it on this book (kiſſes her hand, whilſt ſhe ſtruggles to withdraw it.)

*Har.* Forbear, my lord, I meant you no compliment; and if I had, I would not be thus thanked.

*Mr. Ed.* Fye! child, why ſo prudiſh to your father-in-law?

*Har.* Let him ſtay till he is ſo, Sir. I don't underſtand ſuch liberties.

Lord *Bru.* Don't chide her, Edmonds; anger heightens her charms. Happy Leſſingham! to have a wife who is rendered irreſiſtibly lovely, by the very circumſtance which deſtroys the beauty of every other woman; her ſmiles allure, her frowns ſubdue.

*Har.* I wiſh they could ſubdue impertinence, I could find good uſe for them.

Lord *Bru.* I make no doubt but you find ſufficient opportunities to exerciſe your power. The young fellows of the preſent age are tolerably forward, and charms like yours muſt inſpire them with uncommon ardour; if they are impertinent, therefore, you ſhould charge the fault to your own account; ſhould Leſſingham be among the number, I hope you will treat him with lenity, and conſider that the paſſions you inſpire, cannot be of the lukewarm, governable kind.

*Har.*

*Har.* My lord, I have no complaint to make of Lord Leſſingham; as an acquaintance I eſteem him.

Lord *Bru.* And as a huſband you will love him; is it not ſo?

*Har.* My lord, if——

Mr. *Ed.* Come, come, niece, lay aſide all feminine affectation, it is too late to diſſemble; a few airs and niceties may be allowed at firſt, but when every thing is agreed and ſettled, a frank and expreſs conſent is the moſt generous.

*Har.* You know, Sir, I have ſome hours of conſideration yet allowed me, therefore you will be pleaſed to excuſe my taking your advice at preſent. When we meet next I may be more frank and explicit, till then I take my leave. [*Exit.*

Lord *Bru.* A fine creature, upon my ſoul! but ſhe ſeems a little deficient in politeneſs, I think.

Mr. *Ed.* The effects of a country education, my lord; but ſhe is capable of improvement, a little commerce with the world will poliſh her.

Lord *Bru.* Are you ſure ſhe likes this marriage? in what manner does ſhe treat you, Leſſingham?

Lord *Leſſ.* With great coldneſs, my lord.

Mr. *Ed.* Meer affectation, believe me. Her mother has infected her with prudery. Lady Edmonds was always the greateſt prude on earth.

Sincerity

Sincerity never uſed to enter into the compoſition of a female; they were to be interpreted as dreams are, by contraries. Miſs Edmonds is in the old ſtile, and muſt be judged by the manners of the laſt century; for ſhe is as much a ſtranger to the courage and frankneſs of modern girls, as if the *anno domini* of her regiſter was to be found in the puritanical days of Cromwell. A little knowledge of the world will teach her, that minds are now of no ſex, and that women can ſpeak their thoughts as freely and as boldly as any of us.

Lord *Leſſ.* I do not think ſhe would be much improved by learning ſuch a leſſon. Surely a male and feminine mind ſhould be as different as their perſons, or even more ſo; for I proteſt I think a bold impudent woman is worſe than a bearded woman, as her mind is more important than her chin; and I ſhould not be half ſo much ſhocked to ſee a woman ſitting under the barber's hands to be ſhaved, as I have often been at ſeeing them aſſume the rakiſh impudence of a man.

Lord *Bru.* Pray, Leſſingham, how long have you been the advocate of modeſty? I think you were not always ſo preciſe in your notions.

Lord *Leſſ.* I ſhall not pretend to deny that I have had attachments to women who were not really modeſt; but if they had not worn the appearance of it, they could never have charmed me. They have been exactly the reverſe of thoſe Mr. Edmonds ſeems to approve, who I dare ſay are in fact modeſt, though they have laid aſide the air of it. Now, though I believe real modeſty may be very eſſential to the permanent happineſs of a woman; yet in my general intercourſe with the

the world, I confeſs I require no more of the ſex, than that they ſhould preſerve the appearance of it. In a wife my expectations may be more extenſive; the ſubſtance and the ſhadow are there alike neceſſary.

Mr. *Ed.* I believe, after all, my lord, we are moſt of us of your ſon's opinion; but ſhould more eſpecially be ſo, if like him we were on the brink of wedlock, to which ſtate he ſeems to have happily adapted his notions; and that they may lie uſeleſs as little a time as poſſible, let me have the honour of introducing your lordſhip to my brother, that all things may be finally concluded.

Lord *Bru.* I attend you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

SCENE CHANGES TO LADY EDMONDS'S CHAMBER.

Lady EDMONDS, HARRIET, and Mr. and Mrs. HENBURY.

Lady EDMONDS.

THOUGH I am deprived by it of my laſt hope, I cannot but acknowledge that you acted right; it would have been unjuſt to have permitted Lord Leſſingham to ſuffer by your neceſſary diſobedience; to be happy, is not in our power, but to act juſtly is ſo; and conſcious integrity is the beſt ſupport under misfortunes: therein I muſt place my hope, and from that may expect ſome alleviation of the ſorrows that threaten to overwhelm me.

*Har.* Dear madam, you afflict yourſelf beyond reaſon; the worſt evil that threatens me is poverty, the lot of the greater part of the world; ſhall I not be able to ſupport what the weak, the ignorant, the young, the aged, and even the ſick, bear every day with patience? What right have I to be exempt from the hardſhips of indigence? It is true, my birth gave me reaſon to expect to eſcape

eſcape them, but it gave me no right; I could found my title only on the common courſe of things, and they are ever ſubſervient to the ſupreme, unerring will.

Lady *Ed.* I allow poverty is no uncommon lot, and frequently it is no unhappy one, to thoſe who, born to it, are accuſtomed to its hardſhips; but they are with difficulty ſupported by perſons bred in eaſe and affluence: how ſeverely will you pay for the indulgences, the gratifications of your paſt life! Things really uneſſential to the true happineſs of man, are become through habit neceſſaries to you, and former plenty has increaſed your wants. Had you been born and bred in the thatched roofed cottage, and taught from infancy to earn the bread you were to eat, you might poſſibly have been happier than a monarch on his throne; but the eaſe and affluence which we are ſo apt to conſider as a bleſſing, will now be your heavieſt misfortune.

*Har.* By no means. I ought rather to be thankful that I have enjoyed affluence in that ſeaſon of life, when the moſt eſſential benefit can be reaped from it. I owe to it the advantages of education, more enlarged ideas, more refined principles, than I could have acquired in an abject ſtate; and if ſome evils may be more acutely felt from the more exquiſite ſenſibility of a mind accuſtomed to the delicacies of elegant life, they are overbalanced by the improvement of the moral character ariſing from them. The nicer our ſenſibility, the more ſtrongly we feel for others; our humanity becomes refined, our endeavours to ſerve them are proportionably active and vigorous; and our ſtrengthened reaſon ſuggeſts conſolations under our own misfortunes,

fortunes, and alleviates our ſufferings. I muſt have profited little by theſe advantages of early affluence, if I do not from thence either derive the means of warding off the ſeverities of poverty, or fortitude to bear them with compoſure and reſignation.

*Mrs. Hen.* I have often, my dear heterogeneous pupil, complained that your manners were not leſs maſculine; but I now rejoice to find your mind is not more effeminate. Your fortitude delights me, and does you honour. If fears and complainings were of any ſervice, Lady Edmonds and I muſt before this time have ſighed and waſhed you into a happier ſituation; we have furniſhed you with both wind and tide (though you know I am not much addicted to crying) but to no purpoſe; therefore you judge rightly in leaving that part to us; while you nobly ſtruggle with adverſity, and will be a greater gainer in honour, than you are a loſer in eaſe. I am ſo well perſuaded, that, as Mr. Henbury ſays, the man who does not forſake himſelf, is never forſaken by Providence, that I proteſt the tears I have ſhed, have rather been for Lady Edmonds than for you; I can deeply feel preſent diſtreſs, but I never anticipate future evils.

*Mr. Hen.* There is no end of anticipation; we not only render preſent to our minds the evils that futurity has in ſtore, but all that it can poſſibly produce. Why then foreſtal misfortunes, none of which may, and certainly all of which will not, happen. In diſcouraging hope, we throw away the greateſt bleſſing beſtowed on man, that bleſſing which adds enjoyment to the preſent good, and adminiſters conſolation under the moſt oppreſſive misfortunes.

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* To me all hope is dead, I can expect nothing but affliction.

*Mr. Hen.* Inſtead of forming to yourſelf images of diſtreſs, I could wiſh your ladyſhip would employ your imagination on the poſſible benefits that may ariſe from this cloud of adverſity, which at preſent obſcures the ſunſhine of our dear Harry's day. Adverſity calls forth all the talents of a noble mind, diſtreſs forces to exertion. I can ſuppoſe, that thus thrown on his own ſtrength, his faculties will be animated, his mind invigorated by an ardour he might never have felt, if he could ſtill have ſupinely reſted on the conveniences of hereditary wealth; and he be raiſed thereby to ſuch a height of honourable diſtinction, as he would otherwiſe never have attained.

*Lady Ed.* Theſe chimeras can be bred only in a mind more at eaſe than can be that of a tender mother in my ſituation. Can the bleeding heart receive conſolation from ſuch vague improbabilities? Greatneſs may ſometimes take its riſe from adverſity, but, like other unnatural births, it is a prodigy; and how can you more forcibly ſhew me the greatneſs of my misfortune, than by propoſing to me the hopes of what is little leſs than a miracle for my conſolation? I do not fear my ſon's being reduced to the extremeſt indigence, his ſiſters will preſerve him from it, if I cannot; but to be deprived of the ſight of him, is death to me.

*Har.* Fear not, madam, that a total ſeparation between us can ever take place: while we are both on the ſame earth, it ſhall not be in the power of man to prevent my ſometimes ſeeing you. As for what

what you are pleaſed to ſay of my ſiſter's aſſiſtance; though I love them tenderly, I will owe my ſupport only to myſelf. Shall a man bleſſed with youth and health become the penſioner of another's charity!—No—Had nature inflicted any imbecility of mind or body upon me, I would with grateful, and therefore not painful humility, have accepted from the hand of another what my own could not beſtow. But nature has been more merciful; and as ſhe has liberally given me the means of obtaining a due ſhare of her general bounties, I will make good my claim; and have no doubt of ſucceeding, as far as natural wants require; tho' I may not attain to artificial indulgencies, often better wanted than enjoyed.

*Mrs. Hen.* Well, thou art a noble young fellow, that is certain; and I begin to forgive your averſion to petticoats, for I am now convinced they were not ſuited to ſo free, ſo fine a ſpirit. Yet I think I ſtill wiſh you had tried whether ſome advantage might not have been made of the earl's violent admiration. His heart is well known to be of combuſtible materials, and poſſibly you might have made him wiſh to ſupplant his ſon; for by your account he was well diſpoſed to take fire, and it would have gained time.

*Har.* Very little; for if his heart is compoſed of ſuch combuſtible matter as you imagine, it would quickly have burſt into a blaze, and all my views would have been conſumed in the conflagration. And I aſſure you it is no trifle that could perſuade me to face his attack; I know no fire more formidable than that of his addreſſes. You are ſenſible I don't receive very kindly the gentle ſuit of a timid lover; but his lordſhip's ardour is intolerable.

intolerable. I cannot endure to ſee an old man act ſo out of character; a lover of threeſcore is a diſguſting object.

*Mrs. Hen.* I grant it; and you have taken a revenge on him, which he would think a ſevere one, in ſuppoſing him threeſcore, a term at preſent ſome years diſtant from him. I knew him formerly, and can judge of his age by my own, I remember he was a good deal my junior.

*Har.* Very poſſibly; and I might not have thus injured him, had he acted agreeably to his years; but the gaiety of his dreſs, the levity of his converſation, and the pains he takes to affect vivacity, and youthfulneſs of manner, makes him appear older, by the ſtrong contraſt between what he is, and what he would be thought. There is a proper vivacity for all ages, and perhaps none is more agreeable than that ſuited to the old, as it is accompanied with ſome dignity; whereas in youth it is apt to be blended with a degree of levity, which nothing but youth can excuſe.

*Lady Ed.* How can you waſte the time in talking of what is ſo foreign to our great concern, when we ought rather to be preparing for the event we fear, that what little inconveniencies we can avoid may be provided againſt.

*Mr. Hen.* That certainly better deſerves our attention; but that we may not be interrupted, it will be adviſeable to retire into a more private chamber.

*Lady Ed.* I will attend you into yours, we ſhall there not be in much danger of intruders. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

SCENE CHANGES TO TUNBRIDGE WALKS.

*Miſs* EMILIA, *Miſs* CAROLINE, *Sir* RICHARD LUTON.

CAROLINE.

WHO was that gentleman that has juſt left you, Sir Richard.

*Sir Rich.* His name is Allerton; a wild extravagant young fellow, who is taking more pains to ſpend a fortune he has juſt inherited, than his father did to get it, though he was a moſt induſtrious trader; but he devoted only his attention and leiſure to gain, while his ſon ſacrifices his time, his health, and I fear his conſcience, to the deſire of diſſipating wealth ſo laboriouſly acquired.

*Em.* Has he been long here? I never obſerved him before.

*Sir Rich.* No, he arrived but laſt night; and in leſs than half an hour after he came, I ſaw him at the gaming-table; though I have heard, and ſome-

thing he juſt now dropped convinces me there was much truth in it, that he lately loſt at one ſitting ten thouſand pounds, though he had a ſharer in ill luck.

*Em.* One would imagine ſuch a ſtroke ſhould have been ſufficient to damp, for a little time, the ſpirit of play.

*Sir Rich.* Of all ſpirits it is the moſt difficult to lay; I believe the only effectual means would be to ſerve it as the prieſts in ſuperſtitious times uſed to profeſs doing by a perturbed wandering ſpirit, lay it in the Red Sea, or ſome other as effectual piece of water; only in this caſe the body it poſſeſſes muſt be laid along with it, for only death can cure it. The winning gameſter games on, becauſe, as he terms it, he will puſh his good luck; the loſer is inticed, by hopes of recovering his loſs. The one depends on the ſtability, the other on the inſtability, of fortune.

*Car.* Indeed we cannot wonder people continue a practice, for which they find inducements even from contradictory ſuppoſitions. But the loſs does not ſeem to ſit heavy on Mr. Allerton's ſpirits.

*Sir Rich.* Not at all; I believe thought is of all things that to which he is the greateſt ſtranger; and probably he will continue ſo till it becomes the moſt unwelcome gueſt he can receive; for people who will not ſolicit thought as a friend, are at length obliged to admit it as a tormentor. I find that one of the perſons who has made this late depradation on his purſe, is nearly related to a great friend of yours.

*Em.*

*Em.* I am ſorry any friend of mine has the miſfortune to be related to ſuch a perſon; but who do you mean?

*Sir Rich.* Miſs Edmonds. Her uncle Mr. Edmonds, Jack Allerton tells me, was the head of the gang; for they deſerve no other name, who plundered him and another young fellow. One evening, after having invited them to a ſupper, they artfully inticed them to make ſuch free uſe of the bottle, that they were, if not abſolutely intoxicated; yet ſo heated with wine, as not to perceive the means they uſed to cheat them, which they are now pretty ſure, was by falſe dice.

*Em.* If they could prove that, I ſuppoſe the law would grant them ſome redreſs.

*Sir Rich.* Undoubtedly. And Allerton's companion in misfortune, very wiſely determining to expoſe his own folly, rather than ſuffer ſuch villains to eſcape puniſhment, or at leaſt diſgrace, has begun a proſecution againſt them; but Allerton, too wild to reliſh ſo ſober a ſcheme, I ſuſpect is come down hither with an intention of taking a more ſpeedy, though leſs warrantable, and far leſs certain revenge. This I gather from the queſtions he has been aſking me about Edmonds's preſent abode, and the cenſure he caſt on the proſecutor for preferring a legal, to a gentleman-like revenge, calling it meanneſs, and a mercenary preference of money to honour, with much of ſuch idle ſtuff.

*Em.* I never ſuſpected myſelf of a very bloodthirſty diſpoſition, but I feel that I ſhall be inclined to forgive Mr. Allerton much of his folly, if he

ſhould by one fortunate thruſt deliver my friend from the perſecutions of that wretch.

*Sir Rich.* The friendſhip muſt be very ſtrong that can reconcile the gentle Emilia to the thought of duel and murder; can a heart capable of ſuch attachment feel only for a friend? can no return be afforded to a lover? I am almoſt jealous of Miſs Edmonds; ſhe engroſſes your whole affection.

*Em.* Not ſo, Sir Richard, my friends have ſtill their ſhare; but as for love, I have really none to beſtow; and he who ſolicits it, may excite my hatred, but has no chance to gain my affections. Why will you oblige me to repeat ſo often what gives me no pleaſure to ſay; nor, I preſume, can give you any to hear; that if you would not chuſe I ſhould liſten to you with ſomething worſe than indifference, you will forbear this ſubject.

*Sir Rich.* I am ſenſible I have little merit to plead; but can a father's ſanction produce no effects in my favour?

*Em.* None; that a man, who has either true affection, delicacy, or generoſity, can wiſh. A father may claim a right to diſpoſe of my hand, but he cannot give my heart; that power I even have not myſelf; love will not come at our command; if it would, I aſſure you it ſhould before this time have been yours; I have endeavoured to love you; I long liſtened with patience to your addreſſes; I uſed every means to awaken ſome affection towards you in my heart; as my moſt fervent wiſh has ever been to render my inclinations conformable to my father's commands; but all my endeavours have been fruitleſs; or what is worſe,

worſe, ſerved only to ſhew me the impoſſibility of my returning your love.

*Sir Rich.* Cruel Emilia! Some happier man, I fear, has obtained that heart, whoſe worth is above the wealth of kingdoms.

*Em.* Forbear ſuch ſuppoſitions, Sir; no man ever yet made an impreſſion on my heart; perhaps none ever will; however vanity may prompt you to believe, that only prepoſſeſſion in favour of another can render me indifferent to you. Believe me, no ſuch mighty barrier is neceſſary to preſerve my heart againſt any attacks you can make upon it.

*Sir Rich.* Is it generous, madam, to return only contempt and ſcorn for the ſincereſt paſſion that ever man felt?

*Em.* If I feel any contempt, it is not produced by your love, Sir Richard, but by your obſtinate perſeverance in your addreſſes, after you are ſo well acquainted with my indifference. If the perſecutions you occaſion me do not excite my hatred, attribute it rather to the natural turn of my temper, little inclined to hate, than to my juſtice.

*Sir Rich.* Can you blame me for not relinquiſhing the hopes your father gives me of your hand?

*Em.* Certainly I can, when I give you no hopes of my heart.

*Sir Rich.* But as you ſay no one has yet obtained it, I have great reaſon to hope, that the aſſi-

duity and tenderneſs of the huſband will not prove unavailing with a virtuous wife.

*Em.* The man who fancies that duty will produce love, I am apt to believe will find himſelf diſappointed; virtue may preſerve his wife from admitting a partiality for any other man, but will not make her ſee charms in him which do not exiſt; and indeed *he* has no title to a woman's affections, who marries her contrary to her inclinations.

*Sir Rich.* But, my dear madam, what can a man do who finds he is not fortunate enough to gain a lady's affections?

*Em.* If he has any delicacy, he will wiſh to obtain her eſteem, and that can be done only by deſerving it; which he certainly does not, if he prefers his own gratification to her happineſs.

*Sir Rich.* Oh! my dear Emilia, you talk like one whoſe heart has ever been chilled with cold indifference. If you knew what it is to love, you would not think it ſo eaſy to forego all hopes of happineſs.

*Em.* I do indeed know little of love; and am glad of it, if the conſequences of that paſſion are want of generoſity; let me add cruelty and injuſtice.

*Sir Rich.* How heavy a charge you bring againſt me, when all you have really to condemn me for, is loving you too well.

*Em.* If ſuch are the effects of love, may I ever be the object of hatred; if you perſiſt in your purpoſe,

purpoſe, you may be certain you will be the object of mine.

*Sir Rich.* Pardon me, Emilia, if I cannot believe that a woman, whoſe heart is not prejudiced in favour of another, will long continue obdurate to a huſband who adores her.

*Em.* Since nothing but experience will convince you, were I not to be the greater ſufferer, I ſhould not be ſorry you ſhould feel the melancholy conſequences of your obſtinacy.

*Sir Rich.* But, my dear madam——

*Em.* Sir Richard, I will hear no more. I am tired of ever ſaying the ſame things, on the ſame odious ſubjects, and ſhould not have given you an opportunity of talking to me ſo long, had not my father ordered me to wait here for his return, but I imagine ſomething has prevented him; at leaſt he cannot wonder if we ſtay no longer. Come, Caroline, let us go home.

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter* Lord LESSINGHAM.

Lord LESSINGHAM.

I HOPE I do not fright you away, ladies. Do not deprive me, madam (to Caroline) of the pleaſure I ſo much longed for; let me, at leaſt, enjoy the happineſs of beholding you a few minutes

*Car.* A few minutes, I believe, your lordſhip would think full ſufficient for that happineſs, but really we have not any to ſpare at preſent. Come, ſiſter, we have too long been the only women on the walks.

Lord *Leſſ.* Inhuman, Caroline! (catching hold of her petticoat) hear me but an inſtant!

*Car.* To what purpoſe, my lord? I am ſure you can have no buſineſs with me worth detaining me, when it is ſo very inconvenient; I abſolutely cannot ſtay, therefore, my lord, do not ſtop me.

Lord *Leſſ.* I know I do not deſerve you ſhould indulge me; I feel it ſenſibly; yet hear me, my lovely Caroline! hear me with the compaſſion to which, however blameable, my wretchedneſs may lay claim.

*Car.*

*Car.* This language, my lord, is an inſult I had no reaſon to expect; I hoped, at leaſt, to be reſpected——

Lord *Leſſ.* My reſpect, my admiration, my love, are all yours; believe me, my ſweet girl, my heart never was one moment eſtranged from you.

*Car.* My lord, you amaze me—you diſtreſs me—pray let me go.

Lord *Leſſ.* Have you no pity for a man, who, ſubject to the ſtern authority of a father, who—

## SCENE IX.

*Enter Mr.* MARTIN.

*Mr.* MARTIN.

I HAVE made you wait a long time, girls; I did not intend it, but I was detained. I am afraid you are tired; however, I am glad you have avoided Lord Leſſingham; I know the impertinence of young noblemen ſo well, that I was afraid he might have attempted to force himſelf into your company; though I was pretty ſure Caroline—is not ſo mean-ſpirited, as to ſpeak to a

man who has trifled with her, till he made her a ſubject of converſation for the whole place; yet, I think neither her birth nor fortune are ſuch as give him a right to treat her in that manner; notwithſtanding his fooliſh title.

Lord *Leſſ.* I am very ſorry, Sir——

*Em.* [*Aſide to* Lord Leſſingham.] Peace, my lord, you will only make the matter worſe by any thing you can ſay. Let it paſs, and do not force my father to acknowledge you are here.

*Car.* I aſſure you, Sir——

*Mr. Mar.* You need not, child; I know if he had attempted it, you would not have ſuffered him to ſpeak to you. In not at firſt diſcouraging his unmeaning addreſſes, you are not more to blame than moſt other girls would have been; you all think it neceſſary to have a dangler at ſuch a place as this, and receive any one in that character too readily, for fear of appearing more neglected than your young companions; but the girl, who ſuffers herſelf to be twice trifled with, deſerves to be never ſeriouſly addreſſed; and yet I ſuppoſe you would think that a heavy puniſhment; however, I am ſure you will never deſerve it, by any meanneſs of that ſort. But I am glad he had not the inſolence to attempt to join you, it might have put you under ſome difficulty.

*Em.* It is late, Sir, ſhall we not go home?

*Mr. Mar.* With all my heart. You will dine with us, Sir Richard.

*Sir*

*Sir Rich.* I will do myſelf the honour of waiting on you, Sir. [*Exit Mr. Martin and Ladies.*

Lord *Leſſ.* Was ever any thing like that old fellow?

*Sir Rich.* That is always his method of expreſſing his diſpleaſure.

Lord *Leſſ.* I would have pulled any other man by the noſe for ſuch a method, however. But my Caroline's father may inſult me with impunity; and indeed I am conſcious I deſerve it. What can I do, Luton, to obtain the dear girl's pardon?

*Sir Rich.* Faith that is more than I can tell; and what is more, I know not what good it would do you, except you could alſo obtain her father's. Your ſituation would without it be more hopeleſs than mine; for they are ſuch dutiful girls, that the father's approbation is more important than the daughter's. I am perſuaded they will never marry without their father's conſent, but I flatter myſelf one of them at leaſt will marry without her own.

Lord *Leſſ.* Thoſe are terms on which, I aſſure you, I would not marry. I adore my Caroline's perſon, but I would not accept it without her heart.

*Sir Rich.* Mighty delicate this, my lord; but I, who am leſs refined, think the perſon of moſt conſequence, and it is what one can be moſt ſure of; the ſmalleſt ſprig of divinity can give us an indefeaſible title to it; but neither the whole bench

bench of biſhops, nor the pope, conclave, and council, can ſecure us the poſſeſſion of a woman's heart; he who has it when he marries her, may not retain it a twelvemonth.

Lord *Leſſ.* That is poſſible, I confeſs; but I believe when it is ſo, it is oftener the fault of the man; it muſt be acknowledged we are very apt to grow tired of our wives, and we cannot wonder then if they follow our example; but at worſt it is ſomething to have a year good; in your ſcheme you are not likely to have even a happy day.

*Sir Rich.* I don't think ſo. Women are good creatures; they are mighty apt to love their huſbands; I make little doubt but the gentle Emilia will be of this number; and then your lordſhip muſt allow I ſhall have one advantage, I ſhall have the whole ſtock of her love, ſhe will have waſted none of it in ſighing, before prudery would ſuffer her to acknowledge it; whereas thoſe who love before marriage, puff away half of it, while the poor ſwain is pining with anxiety and fear, from his ignorance of the ſtate of his miſtreſs's heart. If you chuſe to diſcuſs this point farther, my lord, I will make the beſt of my argument while I am dreſſing, if you will honour me with your company at my lodgings; for, if I ſtay longer here, I ſhall make the old gentleman wait dinner, which will not ſweeten his temper.

Lord *Leſſ.* No; I have no great deſire to continue a diſpute which will ſcarcely bring conviction to either, therefore I will take my leave of you here. We ſhall meet in the evening, I ſuppoſe.

*Sir Rich.* No doubt. The twin ſtars will attract us to the ſame place. Your ſervant, my lord.

Lord *Leſſ.* Adieu. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

ACT

# ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*Mr.* EDMONDS. JAMES.

*Mr.* EDMONDS.

ARE you ſure it was Jack Allerton?

*James.* An pleaſe your honour, I know him perfectly well; I cannot be miſtaken in him, for he paſſed cloſe by me, but he does not know me.

*Mr. Ed.* Nay, I don't ſee why I ſhould doubt it, nothing is more probable than that an idle young fellow ſhould come to Tunbridge, at a ſeaſon of the year when there is ſo little to do any where elſe. But why do you ſuppoſe he has any deſign againſt me?

*James.* It is no ſuppoſition of mine, an it pleaſe your honour; his ſervant told in confidence to my landlady at the Bell, that his maſter was come down to fight a gentleman (though that I confeſs was not the appellation he gave your honour) who had cheated him of ten thouſand pounds, and my landlady in confidence told it me.

*Mr. Ed.* Well done, James; ſo you have got into the landlady's confidence already; you loſe no time; nothing like diligence.

*James.* I have learnt it of your honour.

*Mr. Ed.* Yes, I think you have improved in my ſervice. *James.*

*James.* I muſt otherwiſe be a dull ſcholar, Sir, after the ſix and twenty years apprenticeſhip I have ſerved to your honour.

Mr. *Ed.* But this fool, Allerton! what can I do with him? I could excuſe the dog his threatenings, if he would make good his charge; but damn him I had but three thouſand pounds of his money; Dick Hazard, Tom Brag, Will Cogdie, Tim Cheatwell, Bob Sharp and Jack Loo, divided the reſt amongſt them; why muſt he begin with me?

*James.* I ſuppoſe he ſingles your honour out as the chief of the company.

Mr. *Ed.* That is an honour I don't deſire. I am a hero with a box and dice in my hand; but I always had a curſed averſion to iron-inſtruments.

*James.* What does your honour intend to do?

*Mr. Ed.* Faith that is more than I can determine, but I know what I will not do; I will not fight, that is certain.

*James.* I fancy, Sir, he expects as much? for his man ſaid, that if the gentleman would not fight, his maſter would poſt him up for a coward.

*Mr. Ed.* That muſt be avoided, if poſſible. It is damn'd hard, that if a man is not fool enough to throw away his life, he muſt be declared a coward.

*James.* Your honour knows the worſt of it.

*Mr. Ed.* That is true; however, I never was poſted up for one, but once, and the conſequences were diſagreeable enough; yet not ſo bad as being run through the body, neither. I would, however,

ver, gladly eſcape both. I will pretend ſickneſs, to excuſe my going abroad, and if any letter or meſſage is brought to me, refuſe to take it; ſay, I am buſy, and you cannot give it me. I will bring this affair of my niece's to as quick a concluſion as I can, and then I will get away, and carry my booby brother with me; for by a letter I received juſt now, I am afraid our law affair will go damn'd ill; Allerton might have contented himſelf with that, if he had not been curſedly unreaſonable.

*James.* I never liked Mr. Brag's ſervant being let into the ſecret; if it had not been for him, they could never have known any thing about the dice; I am ſure your honour will do me the juſtice to ſay, that in all the twenty years I have loaded your dice, no body has ever been able to prove a tittle of the matter.

*Mr. Ed.* No, no, thou art an honeſt fellow, James, and I will reward thee nobly.

*James.* I thank your honour, that may be when you pleaſe; but if you would be ſo good as to pay me a little of my wages now, it would be very ſeaſonable; a family is chargeable; it is ſo long ſince my wife or I had any wages of your honour, that ſhe has ſcarcely got cloaths to wear; and my poor daughter is very ſick and ill, we want to have a phyſician to her, only we have not wherewithal to fee him.

*Mr. Ed.* Pho—what can the doctor do? phyſic is all a cheat; they pretend to much, but they preſcribe by chance; and if they cure, it is by chance; yet, of all who live upon chance, they the leaſt know how to make the doctrine of chances

ces turn to their advantage, or rather to that of their patients.

*James*, Well, Sir, let that be as it may, when we are ſick we are all glad to give them a chance of curing us; and I ſhould not be eaſy if I were not to give my daughter that chance; ſhe is my only child, and it would grieve me ſadly to loſe her; therefore, pray Sir, let me have a little money; I have lived too long upon hope.

*Mr. Ed.* Well, well, you ſhall have money enough ſoon, never fear. If, by getting my niece married, or by exaſperating her father ſo much againſt her if ſhe refuſes lord Leſſingham, that he turns her out of doors, I can but once remove her from his ſight, I ſhall be able to do any thing with him; I will carry him with me to London, and make him give me the better half of his eſtate, or raiſe me the value of it on mortgage; and then I ſhall be able to pay any fine that a conſcionable judge can award, if this proſecution ſhould go againſt me; and I will pay you and your wife all that is due to you; though as for her, were the truth known, I ſuppoſe I am not much in her debt; houſe-keepers generally take care to pay themſelves.

*James.* I ſhall be glad to have your honour thus ſet at your eaſe; yet I think it hard that you will not ſuffer Sir Jeffery to enjoy the comfort of having either ſon or daughter; you might allow him a girl, they would not interfere with the entail.

*Mr. Ed.* Huſh! James; don't let ſuch an expreſſion eſcape you. Though my brother's unintailed eſtate is large enough to be an object of deſire

ſire to me, yet I might perhaps have left him to be coaxed and fondled by a parcel of ſilly girls, if they did not prevent his giving me at preſent that ſhare of his fortune which I, as elder in underſtanding, though younger in birth, have certainly a right to; but whenever I aſk for a conſiderable ſum, his anſwer is, "Oh! but my poor Harriet, "what is ſhe to do? what will become of her if I "part with ſo much money? I cannot give away "her fortune." Thus am I fobbed off with a few paltry hundreds, when I want thouſands. But if I once get him into my hands, that education which has never been of any ſervice to him, ſhall be of much to me; for I will make good uſe of his capacity of writing his name. In this affair I ſhall want ſome of thy aſſiſtance; and thou ſhalt reap a ſhare of the benefit.

*James.* You may depend upon me, Sir, you know I am always ready to ſerve your honour.

*Mr. Ed.* I thank thee, James. But prithee let thy preſent care be to keep off any challenge from Allerton; I will take care not to give him an opportunity of ſpeaking to me. His deſign ſits heavy on my ſpirits; I never was in a more uneaſy ſituation.

*James.* I will do my beſt, Sir.

*Mr. Ed.* Well, I will go to Sir Jeffery; I had worked him up into a violent rage; but in my abſence he may cool again; I muſt keep him in proper temper to receive his daughter's anſwer, that all may correſpond with my wiſhes.——But here he comes, retire. [*Exit James.*

SCENE

## SCENE II.

*Enter Sir* JEFFERY.

*Sir* JEFFERY.

WHY, brother, I thought you were loſt.

*Mr.* Ed. I had ſome orders to give my ſervant, Sir Jeffery; and my anxiety, leſt your daughter ſhould perſiſt in her diſobedience, and thereby afflict the father, whom ſhe ought to endeavour by every means to oblige and obey, made me forget how long I had been abſent from you.

*Sir Jeff.* You are very good, brother, very kind indeed. I know you conſider all my concerns as your own.

*Mr.* Ed. [*Aſide.*] I *hope to do ſo at leaſt*—Indeed, Sir Jeffery, I could wiſh for my own eaſe, that I felt leſs for you. I get none of that quiet I hoped to ſecure to myſelf by living a bachelor; for I feel all the anxieties of a parent for your children, joined to the tendereſt paternal love. I ſometimes think I will endeavour to eſtrange my heart from you and them, and go abroad, that I may no longer be expoſed to the pain of hearing any thing vexatious about them.

*Sir Jeff.* Oh! dear brother, do not mention ſuch a thing, you would break my heart. I don't know

know what I could do without ſuch a friend as you are, to aſſiſt me in my hard trials. There are ſo many bad deſigning people in the world, that one does not know how one might be impoſed on, if ſo be, that in caſe one had not ſuch a true friend as you, to watch for one. My headſtrong children would in time get the better of me, ſure enough.

*Mr.* Ed. That thought it is that keeps me in England, and makes me ſtill give my beſt attention to your affairs. My nieces, I am ſorry to ſay, are ſo artful, that no one perſon could have ſagacity ſufficient to elude all their deſigns; but, by uniting our care, we aſſiſt each other, and together can diſcover views that might not be perceived by one alone.

*Sir Jeff.* Ay, brother, two heads are better than one, is a true ſaying, and to be ſure we help one another mightily, when we join our two ſagacities together, as you ſay. They muſt be cunning indeed that can out-wit us both. But I wonder how women can be ſo inſolent as to fancy they can out-wit us; perhaps ſometimes, when they have ſilly, very ſilly, fellows to deal with, they may deceive them; but, brother, I think we are no fools, ha, brother?

*Mr.* Ed. I hope not, Sir Jeffery; but certainly your daughters think we are, or they could not undertake to manage us; if Miſs Harriet were not of that opinion, ſhe would not ſuppoſe ſhe would be ſuffered to refuſe a young nobleman, to whom ſhe can poſſibly have no objection, but his being choſen by you.

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* An inſolent baggage! I ſhall teach her her duty, ſhe ſhall ſee what it is to diſobey her father; if a hundred lords were to offer, ſhe ſhould have none but Lord Leſſingham; I will be lord and maſter in my own family.

Mr. *Ed.* You are much in the right, brother; and if I were you, I would ſend for Miſs Harriet, and make her give her anſwer directly; the time you allowed her for conſideration is elapſed, and prolonging it will only make her more perverſe; thought and conſideration ſerve but to render women more wrong-headed.

Sir *Jeff.* That is true. I will ſend for her. Thomas, [*calls*] Thomas, tell my daughter, Harriet, to come hither.

Mr. *Ed.* Now, Sir Jeffery, ſtick cloſe to your point; you muſt expect tears and entreaties in abundance; be upon your guard, that you may not be melted by them, for if ſhe ſees you relent, ever ſo little, it will encourage her in her oppoſition. Women owe their power more to their tears than to their beauty; they are the true feminine arms, with which they conquer men, whom the ſword could never ſubdue.

Sir *Jeff.* Never fear me, brother; let her cry, if ſhe will, I ſhall not mind it; I give her no reaſon, I am ſure; many girls would cry for a lord, but ſhe muſt be an errant fool who cries, becauſe ſhe is to have one. I am aſhamed of having ſuch a fool for my daughter; but children do degenerate, they will not always take after their parents; why, would you think brother, that Jockey and Tray,

Tray, who, you know, are both true ſpaniels of King Charles's breed, have got a black and white puppy, for all the world like a common cur: Tray pupp'd of it the very week before I came out of the country.

Mr. *Ed. Ha, ha, ha! a notable inſtance.* [*Aſide.*] I am afraid, brother, that Tray muſt have been guilty of ſome little inconſtancy, and preferred ſome ſcoundrel cur, to her proper mate, Jockey. But this inſtance will not account for the degeneracy of your children, as I dare ſay you don't ſuſpect my lady of playing you any ſuch trick.

Sir *Jeff.* No, no, brother, it is not ſuch men as me that women cuckold. There are ſome ſneaking fellows indeed who they ſerve ſo, and one does not much wonder at it; but where can the woman who has me mend herſelf? ha, brother?

*Mr.* Ed. Very true, Sir Jeffery; it might be difficult, as you obſerve; but women, when they are ſo diſpoſed, do not always require their paramours to be preferable to their huſbands, in any one circumſtance, but that of not being their huſbands, that ſingle merit will make up for every deficiency. Did you never read Dryden, brother? he had had two wives, and was thought to be pretty well acquainted with others of the ſex; and he tells us his opinion of women very plainly, when he ſays, "and the firſt devil ſhe "ſaw, ſhe changed her love." But here comes my niece; now ſhew her, that if ſhe is a fool, you are not; that, on the contrary, you have wiſdom enough to make her wiſe too.

Sir *Jeff.* That I will, I promiſe you, brother.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Enter Lady* EDMONDS *and* HARRIET.

*Mr.* EDMONDS. [*Aſide to Sir* Jeffery.]

OBSERVE, ſhe has brought her bully-back with her.

*Har.* Did you ſend for me, Sir?

*Sir Jeff.* Yes, I did ſend for you, minx; but not for you, my lady: but you will always be thruſting yourſelf where you have no buſineſs.

Lady *Ed.* I did not imagine my preſence could be thought impertinent where my huſband and my child are; or that they could have any buſineſs where I muſt not conſequently have ſome concern.

*Sir Jeff.* You are always thinking and imagining, and never to the purpoſe; you have nothing to do here that I know of, it was only Harriet that I wanted.

*Mr.* Ed. You had better come to the point, Sir Jeffery, my lady, you ſee, chuſes to keep her ground, trifling diſputes only create unneceſſary delay.

Lady *Ed.* I do indeed, Sir, chuſe to keep my ground, except Sir Jeffery is deſirous of being alone with his daughter, then I ſhall willingly retire;

tire; but ſurely the wife and mother has as good right to be preſent, as the brother and uncle.

*Mr.* Ed. Nay, madam, I aſſure you I am not fond of my poſt, there is nothing I hate ſo much as domeſtic altercations; I have preſerved myſelf from them at home, by never taking a wife; therefore, you cannot ſuppoſe I am deſirous of being a witneſs of the quarrels in any other family. If Sir Jeffery will permit, I ſhall be glad to retire.

*Sir Jeff.* Oh! no, brother, dear brother, don't leave me.

*Mr. Ed. (If I had not been ſure of your anſwer, my ſweet brother, I ſhould not have made the offer.)* [*Aſide.*] I am at your command, Sir Jeffery, you are my elder brother, and I obey. But pray don't mind me. Say what you intended, I ſhall not meddle in your affairs. No one is ſo good a judge of what is prudent and proper as yourſelf. You had better at once tell my niece on what account you ſent for her. *(He will triſle here all day without coming to the point.)* [*Aſide.*

*Sir* Jeff. Why, Harriet, I ſent for you to tell me in one word, whether you chuſe to be turned out of doors, or to marry Lord Leſſingham?

*Har.* Dreadful alternative! May I not hope from a father's indulgence——

*Sir* Jeff. No, that you may not; I will have no dallying; my indulgence it is that makes me wiſh to ſee you a lady, it is indulging the vanity all you women have.

*Har.*

*Har.* Indeed, Sir, I have it not, why therefore muſt I be rendered unhappy becauſe ſome women are vain? I have not the leaſt deſire for a title.

*Sir* Jeff. That's nothing to me, I deſire to ſee my daughter have one, and that is ſufficient; I am your father, I have a right to command you, and I will be obeyed.

*Har.* In every thing elſe, Sir, obedience would be my greateſt pleaſure, but in this it is impoſſible.

*Mr.* Ed. Are you married already, madam?

*Har.* No, Sir, I am not.

*Mr.* Ed. Then I own I cannot conceive where the impoſſibility can be of your obeying your father.

*Har.* As it is not conſiſtent with the deſire of happineſs naturally implanted in every human heart, for us to chuſe what we know will render us unhappy; it is impoſſible for me to conſent to a thing that will make me ſo.

*Mr.* Ed. Impoſſible to chuſe, perhaps, but not impoſſible to conſent. What muſt we think of that daughter's ſenſe of duty, who will obey only when the command correſponds with her own inclination?

*Sir* Jeff. Very true; fine duty that indeed; ſo I ſuppoſe you would only have me command juſt what you bid me. A pretty ſort of a father you would make of me truly; you would govern me then, would you? you are mightily miſtaken, for I ſhall

I ſhall govern you, I aſſure you; and either conſent to marry Lord Leſſingham as ſoon as ever writings can be drawn, and to receive directly Lord Bruton as your father-in-law, and his ſon as your intended huſband, or leave my houſe this inſtant, and never attempt to ſee my face again till you have learnt your duty.

*Har.* Dear Sir, on my knees, I——

[*Kneels to him.*

*Sir* Jeff. What have I to do with your knees? if you are as diſobedient kneeling as ſtanding, I know of no uſe in your changing your poſture.

Lady *Ed.* Dear Sir Jeffery, let me beſeech you to have pity on your daughter, on me, on yourſelf; for a moment's reflection will make you ſhudder at the thought of having turned out of doors a girl ſo young, ſo lovely as your Harriet.

*Sir* Jeff. It is ſhe turns herſelf out of doors, ſhe may ſtay if ſhe will, ſhe need but obey me, and I ſhall be ſatisfied.

Mr. *Ed. He begins to cool, this muſt not be.* [*Aſide to* Lady Edmonds.] Indeed, my dear madam, I know not how to forgive your implied reflection on my niece; is it poſſible that you can think her virtue is not ſtrong enough to conquer any dangers to which her beauty may give riſe? The very cauſe of my brother's anger ſhews the young lady is not deficient in reſolution and ſteadineſs. I am ſure, as ſhe can refuſe to comply with her father's inclinations, ſhe will not ſubmit to thoſe of any other perſon; if ſhe can reſiſt even what is juſt, ſhe is certainly able to repel what is vicious.

*Sir* Jeff. Very true, brother, ſhe has ſpirit and obſtinacy enough to ſecure her, and ſhe muſt be very wicked indeed, if ſo be ſhe will follow bad

courſes, rather than marry a very pretty young Lord; ſhe knows on what terms ſhe may be received again by me; but if in caſe ſhe will not agree to them, ſhe ſhall not ſtay an hour longer in this houſe.

*Lady Ed.* Dear Sir Jeffery, grant her but one week's reſpite; allow her a little time for conſideration; on my knees [*Kneels.*] I implore you, in pity to a wife, who, ſince ſhe was yours, has never before contended with your will, at leaſt, to delay this cruel reſolution.

*Mr.* Ed. (*Aſide to Sir* Jeffery) Stick cloſe to your point, there is no other way of bringing them to reaſon.

*Sir* Jeff. (*Aſide to* Mr. Edmonds.) Never fear. (*Aloud.*) Hold your tongue, wife; all you get by oppoſing me is, that I charge you never to attempt to ſee her; if you do, you ſhall follow her, that's all. Do you think it ſuch a mighty merit that you have never before contended with my will? Is not obedience your duty? What thanks then do I owe you? If in caſe you don't obey me ſtill, and forbear ever attempting to ſee that obſtinate, wilful minx, I ſhall make no ceremony of ſhewing that I know how to exert the authority of a huſband, as well as that of a father. Get out of my houſe this inſtant, you ſaucy baggage, and ſee how you like your diſobedience. [*Going.*

Lady *Ed.* and *Har.* Dear Sir, hear us but one moment. (Mr. Edmonds *pulls him by the ſleeve.*

*Sir* Jeff. Not I, I will hear no more. Get you gone; I will ſee my houſe rid of all diſobedience. You know my mind now, and I ſhall not alter it. —So march—march—do you hear.

(*Exit* Sir Jeffery *and* Mr. Edmonds.

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* Oh! my child, my dear child! what will become of you! and how can I live without you. (*Sinks into a chair and weeps.*

*Har.* Dear madam, be comforted, your ſorrow touches me far more nearly than any diſtreſſes that may befal me.

Lady *Ed.* Muſt my afflictions never know a period? Condemned through life to the worſt of ſlavery, deſtined to be the ſlave of a tyrant weak in every thing but power, who has no other meaſure for his own importance, but the degree of ſuffering he inflicts on me! yet could I but blame him, it would move me to exert endeavours to obtain redreſs, but he, alas! is the object of my pity; and while I ſorrow for myſelf, I grieve for him, whoſe happineſs is impaired by all that deſtroys mine. The weakneſs of his underſtanding renders him the innocent cauſe of all my wretchedneſs, as it makes him liable to be impoſed upon by the worſt of men; whoſe conſtant endeavour it has ever been to make me miſerable. I ſoon found the cruelty of my lot; but when Providence gave me children, I hoped that in them I had a ſtore of bleſſings, of which his malice could not deprive me. But alas! they have proved the ſource of my greateſt calamities. How many tears has the untimely death of many of them coſt me! How many pangs have I ſuffered for thoſe who ſtill live! And now to have the darling of my heart torn from me, the beſt, the loveliеſt of children; endeared by being ſaved from impending deſtruction! to be deprived of my laſt, my only remaining joy and comfort, it is too much!

*Har.* My deareſt madam! you conquer all my fortitude, at the time when I moſt want it. You

melt me to female ſoftneſs, when manly courage can alone ſupport me. The proſpect of dangers and difficulties do not alarm me, but your grief ſtabs me to the heart. I beſeech you ſpare me this dreadful trial, and for *my* peace, endeavour to regain your *own*. Be not ſo affected by a tranſient ſtorm which muſt blow over, depend upon it my father will relent.

Lady *Ed.* Oh! never, never. His vile inſtigator will prevent all the ſoft emotions, the tender regrets, which might naturally ariſe in the breaſt of a parent; or if he cannot quite repreſs them, he will ſoon awe them into ſilence; for a man of Sir Jeffery's degree of underſtanding had rather be thought unnatural than weak. Mr. Edmonds has pretty nearly compleated all the harm he can do me; all that is left him, is to prolong the exiſtence of my injuries. This laſt is his maſter-piece in miſchief, and never will he again ſuffer me to enjoy the preſence of my child. His wickedneſs deprives me of hope, the only reſource of the wretched. *(Weeps.*

*Har.* Deſpair, my dear mother, is an unnatural inmate of ſuch a mind as yours. Reſignation to the will of a ſuperior power, and confidence in his goodneſs, have ever been your ſupport hitherto: Oh! loſe not now ſo neceſſary a conſolation.

*Lady* Ed. My child, you recal me to my duty. I will endeavour to ſubmit and to hope, but in the very moment of calamity I find myſelf too weak; at preſent all the mother prevails; the maternal heart muſt feel; but when the firſt ſhock is paſſed, poſſibly the Chriſtian may happily prevail over the mother.

SCENE

## SCENE IV.

*Enter Mr. and Mrs.* HENBURY.

Lady EDMONDS.

OH! my good friends, you are come to ſhare the affliction you cannot cure. My child is baniſhed from the parental roof.

*Mrs. Hen.* We know it but too well. Expectation had prepared us for it; yet although we had little hope of any happier event, we waited with anxious expectation for a certainty; when meeting Sir Jeffery and Mr. Edmonds in the garden, the former made us underſtand what had paſſed, by ordering me to ſee whether Miſs Harriet had left the houſe, and if not, to haſten her departure; for he would not ſuffer her to remain an hour longer.

*Lady* Ed. How inſatiable is cruelty! Is there ſuch luxury in grief that they envy me the few ſad moments I might yet paſs with my child? I am forbidden to ſee her after ſhe leaves this houſe, and yet not allowed to behold her a little longer, tho' my eyes are of no value to me, but as they enable me to look on her, nor when ſhe is removed from them can have any employment but to weep.

*Mrs. Hen.* My dear lady, you only aggravate your ſorrow by delay. By detaining the object of their anger, you may exaſperate them, but can adminiſter no conſolation to yourſelf. Every moment you thus obtain, is as painful to you, as the inſtant of ſeparation. I have provided a convenient lodging; let me conduct our dear pupil to it; and reſt

aſſured, that much time ſhall not paſs before you ſee her again. You may truſt to my vigilance, for deceiving their malice. The beſt of mothers and of children ſhall not be long deprived of the ſight of each other.

*Lady Ed.* I know the ardour and activity of your friendſhip, but who can tell what means may be contrived by that arch-fiend, our perſecutor, to fruſtrate all your kind endeavours? How can I part with my only joy, when my eyes may never again be ſo bleſſed! Would you leave me ſo ſoon my Harriet?

*Har.* Were I maſter of my fate, I would never leave ſo excellent, ſo amiable a mother, but as that may not be, I ſubmit the time to you; I have no wiſh, but to give you as little pain as poſſible. Yet I fear my preſence only aggravates your diſtreſs, and the ſight of your grief increaſes mine.

*Mr. Hen.* Be perſuaded, madam; by prolonging your farewel, you make it more afflictive. Permit me to lead you to your chamber.

*Lady* Ed. Muſt it then be ſo? One laſt farewel, one laſt embrace, and then—oh! then! I will ſubmit. [*Embraces* Harriet.] My life, my love, heaven preſerve and bleſs—oh! [*Faints.*

*Har.* Oh heavens! ſhe is breathleſs! Inhuman, deteſtable murderer!—ſhe is gone—ſhe is dead—

Mrs. *Hen.* Peace, peace; this is only a temporary ſuſpenſion of her ſenſes, ſhe will ſoon recover them. Let us take advantage of the opportunity, and after conveying her to her bed, we will

will leave the houſe before ſhe revives, to avoid the repetition of ſo ſad a ſcene.

*Har.* Do what you will with me, I have no power either to act or judge. Her grief ſinks me into infancy. (*Exit.*

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## SCENE V.

SCENE CHANGES TO MR. MARTIN'S HOUSE.

CAROLINE. Lord LESSINGHAM.

*Lord* LESSINGHAM.

GRANT me but a patient hearing, my dear madam.

*Car.* My lord, I cannot. I am ſurprized you ſhould wiſh to expoſe me to my father's anger, by attempting to viſit me; you had ſufficient proof this morning how ſuch a proceeding muſt offend him.

Lord *Leſſ.* I own it; but, my lovely Caroline, there is more terror in your frowns than in the anger of a thouſand fathers. Beſide, I left him engaged in company at the coffee-houſe, and not likely to return home of ſome time; and meeting your ſiſter, who told me ſhe was going to call on Miſs Edmonds, I could not reſiſt the deſire of

ſpeaking to you alone; and can you blame me for taking an opportunity of ſuing for your pardon, which only can alleviate the anguiſh of my mind?

*Car.* My pardon is of ſo little conſequence, my lord, that it is not worth a contention, if I can obtain your abſence by it, I ſhall think the purchaſe cheap; on thoſe terms therefore it is at your ſervice.

Lord *Leſſ.* Thoſe are not the expreſſions of forgiveneſs, my Caroline; I confeſs my fault, and am ſenſible I deſerve all your reſentment; but are the commands of a rigid father no extenuation of my guilt?

*Car.* I don't accuſe you of any guilt, my lord; I never ſuppoſed that by the idle profeſſions of love you made to me, you had any intention of conveying to me the fee-ſimple of your heart, Miſs Edmonds's ſuperior merits gave her a ſuperior right, which I very readily acknowledge; I only deſire to be no longer the object of your addreſſes.

Lord *Leſſ.* I do not diſpute Miſs Edmonds's charms, but could never find they had the power of obliterating my Caroline's for one inſtant from my mind. She may juſtly demand my admiration and eſteem, but my affections can be only yours. Obedience to my father neceſſarily directed my addreſſes, but never could influence my heart.

*Car.* Believe me, my lord, ſuch a declaration does you little honour, and is very unfit to regain you any ſhare of my eſteem; inconſtancy I might forgive, but treachery I never can pardon. To think myſelf injured by being forſaken, is a compliment I do not find myſelf at all inclined to pay you;

you; but by your own account, you endeavoured to injure my friend, in the cruelleſt manner.

Lord *Leſſ.* That is a charge of which I confeſs I cannot acquit myſelf; and had I not been certain that my father by depriving me of my inheritance, would likewiſe have deprived me of you, I could not have determined to obey him. In ſo cruel a ſituation, I wiſhed at leaſt to preſerve ſomething out of the wreck of happineſs; and was reſolved that all the ſtudy of my life ſhould be to compenſate in every thing within my power, for the involuntary injury I ſhould do Miſs Edmonds, by not being able to give her my affections with my hand. I confeſs this would have been a very inadequate return, for the honour of being accepted as a huſband by ſo very amiable a woman; but however blameable, your cenſure would be ſoftened by compaſſion, if you knew what I have ſuffered in the conflict; and it is not to your juſtice, but your pity, that I apply for pardon.

*Car.* I ſee little temptation to give it; for I might thereby expoſe myſelf to all the labours of a popiſh confeſſor, if every time that your father commands you to pay your addreſſes to a lady of his chuſing, I am to be applied to for abſolution. You are ſo very obedient a ſon, that the office really might be too laborious, and abſolutely uſeleſs to us both.

Lord *Leſſ.* No, my deareſt Caroline—

*Car.* Your expreſſions are very familiar, my lord

Lord *Leſſ.* Oh! for heaven's ſake! excuſe them, the cold formality of common appellations ill ſuits the ſentiments of my heart. Let me therefore call

you my deareſt, my lovelieſt Caroline, whilſt I ſwear, that never again ſhall even the proſpect of certain ruin tempt me to aſſume the ſlighteſt appearance of infidelity; of the reality I never can be guilty. I have indeed nothing to offer that is worthy of your acceptance, without my father's conſent, for alas! I have nothing I can call my own, but my worthleſs ſelf; yet that ſelf ſhall ever be ſo devoted to you, that I will bear all the conſequences of his anger, rather than liſten to propoſals of any other woman, though ſhe were to bring with her the wealth of worlds. Tell me but that you forgive me, and even in poverty I cannot be wretched.

*Car.* Leave me, my lord, I beſeech you; you can expect nothing from me while you keep me in ſuch terrors; I hear a rap at the door—ſhould it be my father—I cannot ſtand the ſight of him.

Lord *Leſſ.* Say but you forgive me, my angel, and I will leave you, but I cannot go without your pardon.

*Car.* This is extorting it; under my preſent apprehenſions it will not be a free gift; however, do but go, and I forgive you any thing.

Lord *Leſſ.* May heaven's choiceſt bleſſings reward my beſt, my generous love, for thoſe enchanting ſounds! may——

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* EMILIA.

EMILIA.

LORD Leſſingham! my lord, how could you venture hither?

*Lord Leſſ.* Be eaſy, madam, I go this inſtant. But ſurely friends are much ſooner ſatiated with each other's company than lovers; your viſit has been very ſhort.

*Em.* Oh! my lord, I have made no viſit. When I got to Sir Jeffery's door, I found the very footmen weeping: my Harriet is gone, baniſhed the houſe by her inhuman father; and Lady Edmonds they told me was too ill for any perſon to be admitted to her. I could learn no particulars, for Mrs. Henbury is gone with my Harriet; and Mr. Henbury was buſied, with the menial part of the family, in attendance on the unhappy mother. You may ſuppoſe I did not attempt to ſee Sir Jeffery, who the ſervant ſaid was in the parlour, accompanied by his deteſtable brother, and your Lordſhip's father; but I have no doubt this ill treatment is the conſequence of her refuſing to marry you.

*Lord Leſſ.* It will not admit of a doubt; ſhe could commit no other offence. She feared a no leſs fatal conſequence, and I would gladly have expoſed myſelf to ruin, to have preſerved her from it, but ſhe would not ſuffer me.

*Em.*

*Em.* I am ſure ſhe would not. Her generous mind would prompt her to undergo any misfortune, rather than bring diſtreſs on another. But my lord, you ſaid you were going away, indeed it is neceſſary you ſhould go; I would not for the world have my father find you here.

*Lord Leſſ.* He ſhall not; I leave you this inſtant. Think of me with compaſſion, my deareſt Caroline, I dare not ſay with tenderneſs, and my mind will find ſome reſt.

*Car.* Mine cannot, while your Lordſhip is here, therefore I intreat you to depart without delay.

*Lord Leſſ.* Adieu then, loveliеſt of women.

[*Exit.*

*Em.* What can be become of my Harriet!

*Car.* I wonder ſhe did not fly to us for refuge; ſhe muſt know we ſhould uſe our beſt endeavours to conſole her.

*Em.* I ſuppoſe ſhe was doubtful of my father's approbation, and to ſay truth, with ſome reaſon. Fathers are ſo apt to be prejudiced in favour of paternal authority, that I queſtion whether ſhe would have met with a very kind reception from him; though he has a juſt opinion of both Sir Jeffery and Mr. Edmonds.

*Car.* That thought did not occur to me, though it is but too true. Surely ſhe will acquaint us with the place of her retreat.

*Em.* I have, no doubt of it; but I am under apprehenſions leſt ſhe ſhould have left this place; I am impatient to ſee her, I long to comfort her, though I cannot approve the cauſe of her preſent diſtreſs.

diſtreſs. I ſhould diſapprove it more, were I not prejudiced by my hopes, that it may turn to the advantage of my Caroline. By finding Lord Leſſingham here, I imagine he has once more made a tender of his heart.

*Car.* Indeed he has; and with ſuch apparent ſincerity, that I found it difficult to preſerve the appearance of indifference, or the reality of reſentment.

*Em.* You accepted his ſubmiſſions then?

*Car.* Not abſolutely, I believe; but I proteſt I ſcarcely know what I did. I was ſo diſtracted between love and fear, that I can give but a poor account of what paſſed; I only know that my heart ſoon forgave him; and that at laſt my lips pronounced ſomething like a pardon; but he owed it fully as much to my apprehenſions leſt my father ſhould find him here, as to my inclinations.

*Em.* Well, whatever were the motive, I ſuppoſe he was tolerably ſatisfied in having obtained it; and, to ſay the truth, he wore a very different face when I entered the room, than when I met him as I was going to Sir Jeffery's. I imagined by the alteration, that the conference had not turned out in his diſfavour.

*Car.* I fear, indeed, too much otherwiſe; but what could I do? would not the appearance of great reſentment have been highly flattering, by ſhewing of how much importance he was to me? Surely the reproaches with which our ſex ſometimes load inconſtant lovers, are the greateſt compliments they can pay them. And to ſay the truth, I was more inclined to cry than to ſcold, as I was more grieved than enraged at his infidelity.

*Em.*

*Em.* That I believe. My gentle Caroline's heart was not formed to be the harbourer of tumultuous paſſions. I am of your opinion, that the woman who rages againſt a faithleſs lover raiſes his importance, ſinks her own, and becomes the object of his contempt, as well as of his indifference. A cold eaſineſs of behaviour is what a woman in ſuch a ſituation ſhould endeavour to aſſume, that ſhe may not, with her lover, loſe her dignity, which in truth is a far more eſſential thing. She may go with honour and ſatisfaction through life without the one, or if ſhe chuſes it ſhe may replace the faithleſs ſwain; but a woman who has laid aſide the dignity of her character, is a deſpicable being; and dignity once loſt, can never be regained.

*Car.* Your doctrine is very juſt and true; but, my dear ſiſter, part of it is the theory of one who has never yet begun to practice; eaſineſs is the only thing that cannot be affected, all endeavours to obtain, ſerve more effectually to deſtroy it. A heart oppreſſed by its own tenderneſs may aſſume an air of indifference; anger can borrow the placid ſmiles of good humour; or good humour conceal itſelf under the borrowed ſemblance of reſentment; but eaſe of mind can alone produce eaſy manners; as I have been far from enjoying the one, I cannot flatter myſelf that I aſſumed the other. To aim at it therefore I thought would only make againſt me, but I endeavoured, with what ſucceſs I know not, to appear indifferent.

*Em.* I have a notion you are but a bungler at hypocriſy; however you had one circumſtance in your favour; I fancy his lordſhip was not a very diſcerning critic, he was too warmly intereſted, and too much agitated to obſerve your conduct very

ry nicely. But afrer all, I know not whether he can be juſtified in renewing his addreſſes. He went too far before, for a man who is under the abſolute power of a father; that he is ſo, is the only excuſe he can make for his ſeeming inconſtancy; ſhould he then renew his attack on a heart, which if he be generous he ſhould not wiſh to conquer, as he may be again obliged to deceive it?

*Enter Servant, and gives a note to* EMILIA.

*Em.* It is my Harriet's hand! let the ſervant wait.

*Serv.* He is gone, madam, he went away as ſoon as he had delivered it. [*Exit.*

*Car.* Where is ſhe?

*Em.* She has taken a lodging at the White Houſe. She ſays ſhe is well, and deſires to ſee us as ſoon as poſſible. We will go inſtantly——

*Car.* Not quite, for here comes my father.

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* Mr. MARTIN *and* Sir RICHARD LUTON.

Mr. MARTIN.

SO—there has been fine work, girls—women will be head-ſtrong—there is your intimate and friend, Miſs Edmonds, has done for herſelf—ſhe has got herſelf turned out of doors—ſhe would not marry the man her father had choſen for her;—ſhe has got ſome fooliſh coxcomb in her head, I ſuppoſe.

*Em.* No, Sir, I am perſuaded ſhe is free from any folly of that kind. She did not like Lord Leſſingham indeed—and Sir Jeffery is ſo haſty——

Mr. *Mar.* The man is a fool, but what of that? He is a wiſe man indeed, who never does a fooliſh thing, and he muſt be worſe than an ideot, who never does a wiſe one. In this Sir Jeffery has acted like a man of ſenſe, and on ſuch an occaſion I would have done juſt the ſame thing. If any child of mine was to refuſe to marry the man that I, in my prudence, care, and wiſdom, had choſen for her, I would turn her adrift, and ſhe ſhould ſeek her fortune, if ſhe would not take that I had provided for her. But, thank heaven! I am not in danger of any ſuch trials; my girls have no wills but mine; they will joyfully give their hands wherever I ſhall direct them.

*Sir Rich.* [*Aſide to Emilia.*] May I believe Mr. Martin?

*Em.*

*Em.* Nothing but inſult was wanting, Sir, to compleat your ungenerous conduct.

(*Aſide to Sir* Richard.

Mr. *Mar.* Ah ha! whiſpering! whiſpering! you lovers have always your ſecrets. Emilia cannot I ſuppoſe yet bring herſelf to ſay tender things but in a whiſper; in a little time, Sir Richard, ſhe will ſpeak them more audibly.

*Em.* [*Aſide.* Provoking!] —— Really, Sir, I have nothing ſo tender to ſay, but that I might proclaim it by the town-crier.

*Mr. Mar.* A prude to the laſt minute, Sir Richard. Don't you love prudery? ha, Sir Richard.

*Sir Rich.* Whatever Miſs Martin is, Sir, I muſt love; though I confeſs I have not hitherto been prejudiced in favour of prudes.

*Mr. Mar.* That is one of the follies of you youngſters. When I was young, all women were prudes. I could not get my wife to confeſs ſhe loved me, even as we went to church to be married; I would not have married a woman who was not a prude, I can tell you that.

*Sir Rich.* A man who ſhould now be of ſo ſingular a way of thinking would be in great danger of dying a bachelor.

Mr. *Mar.* That's true, that's true. Women are ſtrangely altered. Where could one then have found a girl, who, like Miſs Edmonds, would have ſhameleſly run away from her father?

*Car.* Dear Sir, do not caſt ſuch a reflexion on Miſs Edmonds; ſhe did not leave her father voluntarily; he cruelly turned her out of doors; and ſo far was ſhe from being ſeduced from her duty

duty by any man, that all this was brought upon her by refuſing a huſband; you might better call her offence an exceſs of prudery, than cenſure it as indecent.

Mr. *Mar.* You think Lord Leſſingham ſo odious, I ſuppoſe, that an extraordinary ſtep receives ſome excuſe, by being done to avoid marrying him; but I proteſt I don't ſee that: I cannot think him ſo very diſagreeable as to juſtify her diſobedience in any degree; an abſolute juſtification is impoſſible, for a modeſt girl ought to ſee only with her father's eyes; whatever defects ſhe may fancy in the man, if her father thinks him a fit huſband for her, ſhe may be ſure he is ſo; it is time enough for a woman to diſcover her huſband's merits after ſhe is married to him.

*Em.* (Fine doctrine!) [*Aſide.*] But ſuppoſe, Sir, ſhe ſhould never diſcover his merits at all?

Mr. *Mar.* She muſt then blame her want of diſcernment, and endeavour, by a double portion of attention and obedience, to make him amends for her culpable blindneſs.

*Em.* (A hard leſſon to learn.) [*Aſide.*] —— Did you hear, Sir, whether Sir Jeffery's anger begins to ſubſide?

Mr. *Mar.* Subſide! how ſhould it ſubſide, except ſhe returns to her duty? No, no, fool as he is, he cannot be ſo very ſilly as to forgive her on any other terms. But I wonder you ſhould think it worth while to enquire about her. I am ſure my daughters are too dutiful to have any concern for ſo diſobedient a girl. I know you blame her as much as I do.

*Em.* You do me but juſtice, Sir, in believing I blame her diſobedience; yet I have particular reaſon

reaſon to pity her, as I am not ſure her refuſal of Lord Leſſingham was not in ſome meaſure owing to her regard for my ſiſter, which made her diſlike the man, who ſhe thought had behaved ill to Caroline.

Mr. *Mar.* A pretty fancy, indeed! No, child, take my word for it, that was a recommendation; there never yet was a girl who did not like a man the better for deſerting another woman for her. You all love to triumph over a rival; and never find any great charms in a man that you have not rendered inconſtant.

*Em.* Pardon me, Sir, if I take the liberty of ſaying you do us injuſtice; if any woman thinks in the way you attribute to us all, ſhe muſt be at once the vaineſt, and the ſillieſt, of her ſex; for a ſmall degree of common ſenſe and common obſervation would convince her, that the man whom ſhe has rendered inconſtant to another, ſome other will as eaſily make inconſtant to her; and ſhe has little reaſon to rejoice in gaining a victory over a rival, when ſhe could not do it without, at the ſame time, conquering thoſe principles in her lover, which alone could deſerve her eſteem.

Mr. *Mar.* Why, child, thou really would'ſt have made a pretty miſtreſs for a hero in romance. Thou may'ſt perhaps fancy Sir Richard and I ſhall believe thee, and admire thy fine-ſpun notions; but we know the ſex too well; don't we, Sir Richard?

*Sir Rich.* Though I allow Miſs Emilia's ſentiments are not common, yet, Sir, as ſhe declares them, I cannot doubt their being ſincere; and I admire them the more, as they are wholly diſintereſted? for ſhe muſt be ſenſible that no man can be inconſtant to a woman like her; and tho' ſhe

ſhe might triumph over many, ſhe can never have a rival.

*Em.* I am ſorry, Sir, I cannot pay the ſame compliment to your ſincerity that you did to mine, but you have really taken it a note too high, my credulity cannot reach it.

Mr. *Mar.* Why, ay, I think he has taken it a little too high; but there is ſome civility in telling a lye to pleaſe you.

*Em.* The favour is too common, Sir, to excite much gratitude.

*Car.* [*Aſide to Sir* Richard.] You would better pleaſe your miſtreſs by contriving to get us abroad, than by a thouſand compliments; for we want to call on Miſs Edmonds, but neither of us dare mention it, for fear of a prohibition.

*Sir Rich.* [*Aſide to* Caroline.] Thank you for giving me an opportunity of obliging. Upon my word Mr. Martin is ſuch good company, that with him the time ſlips away ſtrangely, and one forgets that a fine evening is running to waſte. Will you not take a walk, ladies? It is almoſt a ſin not to enjoy this fine weather.

*Car.* My ſiſter and I were thinking of taking a walk when my father came in.

Mr. *Mar.* It is rather late; however, I can truſt my girls under your care, Sir Richard; their ſafety is now almoſt as much your buſineſs as mine.

*Sir Rich.* The truſt you put in me, Sir, confers both pleaſure and honour, which few truſts do. Give me leave to conduct you, ladies. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE VIII.

### SCENE CHANGES.

*Enter Lord* BRUTON *and Lord* LESSINGHAM.

Lord BRUTON.

'PON my honour, Leſſingham, this rebuff is mortifying; I proteſt I pity thee, to be diſappointed of ſuch a fine girl is a hard caſe, if pride had nothing to do in it. I cannot imagine how thou can'ſt put ſo good a face on the matter.

Lord *Leſſ.* My pride, my lord, is not much wounded; I was never puppy enough to expect every woman to like me; and though I acknowledge Miſs Edmonds to be a very fine woman; yet I confeſs ſhe had made no impreſſion on my heart.

Lord *Bru.* I did not imagine that impreſſion ſo difficult to make, I thought your heart tolerably ſuſceptable; and faith I know no woman, who in my opinion, has a better right to it.

Lord *Leſſ.* Poſſibly, my lord, I might have thought ſo too, had not another woman fixed her image there. I will not pretend to conceal from your lordſhip, that a young lady, more touching, though perhaps not more beautiful, had won my affections before I ſaw Miſs Edmonds; and ſhe kept her ground ſo well, that although my obedience to your commands made me quit her, to pay my addreſſes to Miſs Edmonds; yet her charms

charms could not exclude the firſt poſſeſſor from her place in my heart.

Lord *Bru.* And pray who may this young lady be?

Lord *Leſſ.* Miſs Caroline Martin; the youngeſt daughter of a country gentleman of fortune, who is ſtill at this place. Her beauty, the ſweet gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, her modeſty, and good ſenſe, were to me irreſiſtible; her fortune, I fear, is ſomewhat inferior to Miſs Edmond's; but if your lordſhip would kindly conſent to my marriage with her, I ſhould be indebted to you for the happineſs of that life I have derived from you; and would endeavour to ſupply, by prudence and œconomy, the deficiency in her fortune; which, tho' I have no doubt but it will be a genteel one, cannot, I am ſenſible, be equal to what your ſon might demand.

Lord *Bru.* Then I am ſenſible ſhe cannot do for my ſon. Let me tell you, you would make but a very ungenteel figure on her genteel fortune. I cannot pretend to provide you with the means of indulging your whims; a nobleman, with an incumbered eſtate, can ſpare but little from his own occaſions; therefore, Sir, your Miſs Martin, with all her numerous virtues and graces, can be no daughter of mine.

Lord *Leſſ.* If your lordſhip knew her, I am perſuaded you would think ſhe would do honour to your family.

Lord *Bru.* Oh! my family does not want honour; I warrant you it has honour enough, it ſtands in more need of being enriched. Take my word for it, a wife is but an incumbrance at beſt, but a poor one is the devil. If I were to humour your

your preſent whim, you would be a miſerable dog a year hence. Love is but a ſhort-lived folly, if it does not lead a man into the curſed nooſe of matrimony.

Lord *Leſſ.* The matrimonial nooſe is now no gordian knot; we have learnt a way of untying it almoſt as eaſily as our garters, therefore I ſhould ſuppoſe it muſt have loſt much of its terrors in the eyes of thoſe who heretofore thought it moſt formidable: but I was never among that number; and no one who knows Miſs Caroline Martin can doubt the happineſs of being united to her; if your lordſhip would have the goodneſs to conſent to my being ſo, the firſt buſineſs of my life ſhould be to ſhew my gratitude.

Lord *Bru.* No, no, you would ſoon find yourſelf curſedly bit, I aſſure you, and I will not be acceſſary to a thing of which you would ſo ſoon repent. Beſide, I ſuſpect that the obedience you boaſt was a meer cheat, and that Miſs Edmond's refuſal was owing to the coolneſs of your addreſſes, if not to the more diſcouraging acknowledgments of your paſſion for this girl; but that trick ſhall not ſucceed: you and your Miſs Martin may ſettle what other kind of connexion you pleaſe, I do not trouble my head about ſuch things; but, depend upon it, if you marry her, not one penny of fortune ſhall you ever have from me.

Lord *Leſſ.* And take my word for it, my lord, Miſs Martin is not a girl with whom a man can form any, but the matrimonial connexion.

Lord *Bru.* Well, I ſhall not diſpute the virtue of your Lucretia, it is your buſineſs, not mine, for faith

faith I have no deſign upon her. But can you tell me what is become of Miſs Edmond's?

Lord *Leſſ.* I can, my lord. In paſſing by the White Houſe this evening I ſaw Mrs. Henbury at one of the windows, and on enquiry found ſhe and Miſs Edmonds had been there about an hour. I thought it incumbent on me, who had unintentionally been the cauſe of her baniſhment from her father's houſe, to enquire after her health, and offer any ſervices in my power; flattering myſelf that notwithſtanding ſhe was averſe to marrying me, I ſtood ſo fair in her opinion, that ſhe would not fear my making an improper uſe of any commands with which ſhe ſhould favour me.

Lord *Bru.* Leſſingham, you confirm my ſuſpicion of your having acted an underhand part in this affair; had not her refuſal been concerted between you, it is impoſſible you ſhould be ſo free from reſentment.

Lord *Leſſ.* Upon my honour, my lord, however repugnant to my inclinations, my obedience to your lordſhip's commands were ſo implicit, that I transferred my addreſſes from Miſs Martin to Miſs Edmond's, without giving either of them the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe my doing ſo was owing to any thing but inconſtancy. I really was aſſiduous in my courtſhip, though I will not pretend to ſay, that I wiſhed to be ſucceſsful. I met with ſo little encouragement, that I was ſenſible I had no chance of her hand, except ſhe were actuated by the ſame motive that I was; and this morning ſhe told me her determination, from which I in vain endeavoured to prevail with her to recede; therefore, I was not ſurprized at the anſwer ſhe gave Sir Jeffery, nor can I have any right to be offend-

ed

ed that ſhe does not chuſe to marry me, for which I am conſcious ſhe may have many good reaſons. Could I but hope, my dear Sir, that you would reward my ready obedience by conſenting———

Lord *Bru.* No more of that, Leſſingham, I am not fool enough to think your obedience very meritorious; if nothing but my bleſſing depended on my conſent, I am apt to believe you would be leſs obedient. But how did you find Miſs Edmonds?

Lord *Leſſ.* Leſs diſtreſſed than I expected. She bears her father's cruelty with patience and fortitude, as far as it concerns herſelf; but ſeems greatly affected on her mother's account, whoſe ſpirits are leſs able to ſupport this treatment of her beloved daughter.

Lord *Bru.* Though I cannot blame Sir Jeffery for his juſt ſeverity, yet I ſhall wait on the young lady, to expreſs my concern for having borne any part in the cauſe of her misfortune; ſuch beauty as hers makes one prodigiouſly compaſſionate. I have hitherto been little addicted to that idle impertinence of grieving for other people's ſufferings, but her's touch me very nearly. Of all the girls I ever ſaw, ſhe moſt ſuits my taſte. I am tired of the whining and the tender, they are all alike; but Miſs Edmonds commands one's admiration and ſubjection, with ſuch dignity and ſpirit, that ſhe ſubdues at once. I know ſome men like beſt the women who ſteal the heart, but to me that is meer filching, petit-larceny work; give me the girl who robs me of it *vi et armis.*

Lord *Leſſ.* If your lordſhip would have the goodneſs to undertake her cauſe, I ſhould imagine the influence friendſhip muſt give you over Mr. Edmonds, who governs Sir Jeffery, would enable you to bring about a reconciliation.

Lord *Bru.* By no means. Edmonds is not a man to be influenced by friendſhip; and I am apt to believe is curſedly out of humour at preſent, by which, perhaps, his niece ſuffers; for I hear a proſecution is begun againſt him and others, which, ſhould the charge be proved, would render England no agreeable abode to him. He is ſo down in the mouth, that I could not perſuade him to come abroad this evening.

Lord *Leſſ.* Want of ſpirit, rather than want of ſpirits, might be the occaſion of that, my lord; for Jack Allerton is come down brim-full of fire and fury, determined either to fight or cane him; which, I fancy, will confine Mr. Edmonds pretty cloſely to the houſe.

Lord *Bru.* Why, yes, I do not know but it may; he is a man of peace; he does not love bloodſhed. I remember him formerly a great bluſterer, but unfortunately he one day, like poor Bobbadil, was faſcinated, planet-ſtruck, and got well caned; ſince which time his manners have correſponded better with his mind.

Lord *Leſſ.* May I, my Lord, take the liberty of ſaying, that I wonder how ſo deſpicable a fellow got admitted into the company of men of faſhion; for though vice is no impediment, meanneſs and cowardice generally are ſo.

Lord

Lord *Bru.* Oh he is the moſt uſeful fellow in the world. There is no kind of ſervice he will not do his friends. This very afternoon he gave me a friendly hint; for on my expreſſing my admiration of his niece, he gave me to underſtand, that if I managed the matter cleverly, I might turn her preſent diſtreſs to my advantage, but that I muſt take this with me, ſhe has too much ſenſe to be deceived, and too much pride for voluntary ſeduction.

Lord *Leſſ.* The villain! deteſtable raſcal! how could he venture to affront your lordſhip by ſuch an intimation! Did you not chaſtiſe his inſolence?

Lord *Bru.* No, faith; it was well meant, you know; it was kind to me, though but a raſcally trick upon her. However, I have no intention of making uſe of this piece of his friendſhip; I don't love unfair dealing in theſe matters; nor was I ever fond of enterprize. A kind-hearted girl never found me ſqueamiſh, but I ſhould not chuſe to entrap any woman. I cannot ſay but I could very well like a more laſting connexion with Miſs Edmonds; were there much chance, that ſhe who refuſed the ſon, would accept the father; her charms and her fortune together would ſufficiently ſweeten the matrimonial cup. But it is too late to go to her to-night; I will ſend an inquiry after her health, and wait on her to-morrow morning.

[*Exit.*

Lord *Leſſ.* Surely ſuch a father as mine is a better lecture againſt rakery than ever was delivered from the pulpit. If his example corrupted my manners in my earlieſt youth, it has made

ſome

ſome amends, by reforming them, ſince I arrived at an age, when the underſtanding becomes able to contend with appetite. No man could continue vicious who had a living inſtance daily before his eyes, how contemptible vice renders an old man. Strange, that any one ſhould chuſe to give up the two beſt things man can enjoy on earth, his own approbation, and the eſteem of others!—eſpecially, that for ſo poor a conſideration as age will allow him, he ſhould forfeit the reſpect, the veneration due to his years, if his conduct correſponded properly with them. Yet ought I not to be more mild in my cenſure, ſince I fear I owe my juſter ſenſe of theſe things rather to my Caroline, than to reflection? but if love began the work, reaſon has helped to perfect it; and mercenary as my father is, I have this conſolation, virtue will be rewarded, even though love ſhould be denied indulgence. Yet to that denial I cannot eaſily ſubmit; I muſt try other means of prevailing with my father. Yet I know of none that promiſe me ſucceſs——I will ſee my Caroline again to-morrow; the ſight of her may awaken my invention, and inſpire me with ſome ſucceſsful thought. [*Exit.*

THE END OF VOL. I.

THE

# DISGUISE.

VOL. II.

# THE

# DISGUISE.

VOL. III.

# THE

# DISGUISE,

## A

## DRAMATIC NOVEL.

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VOL. II.

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M,DCC,LXXI.

# THE DISGUISE,

A

DRAMATIC NOVEL.

VOL. II.



DUBLIN:

THE

# DISGUISE,

A

## DRAMATIC NOVEL.

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## ACT IV. SCENE I.

### SCENE A CHAMBER.

HARRIET.

MRS. HENBURY is not uſually ſo ſlow—I fear my mother is ſo ill that ſhe knows not how to leave her. Cruel fate! that I ſhould not be ſuffered to attend her, and to endeavour, by my tender cares and attentions, to repay her ſome of the thouſand anxious hours I have coſt her.

## SCENE II.

*Enter Mrs.* HENBURY.

OH! Henbury, how is my dear mother? Your long ſtay has kept me on the rack.

*Mrs. Hen.* I wiſh I could relieve your uneaſineſs; but alaſs! I have no good news to tell you, except it be that lady Edmonds's health is no more affected than one muſt neceſſarily expect. If the frame is delicate, the body cannot be at eaſe when the mind is diſtreſſed.

*Har.* Alas! I hoped that the night might have calmed her mind, and reflexion abated her apprehenſions for me.

*Mrs. Hen.* So far your hopes were anſwered; ſhe roſe this morning more compoſed, more reſigned, and Mr. Henbury felt great conſolation from the favourable change; but it laſted not long. About an hour before I went thither, her ſervant had informed her, that private orders had juſt been given by Sir Jeffery, to Thomas, to get all things ready for

for his departure this evening, when he intended ſetting out for London with Mr. Edmonds.

*Har.* With my uncle!

*Mrs. Hen.* With him. Thomas, it ſeems, is enamoured with lady Edmonds's maid, and therefore could not forbear divulging a ſecret ſo diſagreeable to him. He tells her alſo, that Mr. Edmonds has often endeavoured to prevail with Sir Jeffery to go with him to town, but he always reſiſted his perſuaſions, alledging that he could not leave his Harriet; but that impediment being removed, he now made little reſiſtance.

*Har.* I fear my uncle has ſome bad views in this.

*Mrs. Hen.* It cannot admit of a doubt. He will certainly make all poſſible advantage of having him in his power. Small as my lady's influence appears, ſhe has been able by her vigilance to fruſtrate many of Mr. Edmonds's deſigns: ſhe inſpires him with that awe, which the wicked cannot help feeling in the preſence of ſpotleſs virtue, and inflexible integrity. He is ſenſible that ſhe is thoroughly acquainted with his vileneſs, and has often relinquiſhed deſigns againſt Sir Jeffery's fortune, when he has found they were diſcovered, rather than drive her to a neceſſity of laying open his whole conduct to his brother, leſt truth ſhould prevail over art; and this he might the better do, as ſhe has never attempted to obſtruct his obtaining a great ſhare of Sir Jeffery's income, ſince that leſs affected her children than herſelf; the only perſon whoſe intereſts ſhe ever neglected. He has therefore long wiſhed to get him from my lady, and in all proba-

bility will keep him ſo till he has defrauded him, by one means or other, of his whole fortune.

*Har.* This is really an alarming conſideration.

*Mrs. Hen.* It has not only renewed, but increaſed Lady Edmonds's anxiety. She fears your being deprived of your whole inheritance; and expoſed to that poverty through life, which filled her with uneaſineſs, when ſhe apprehended it of a ſhorter duration.

*Har.* But how can that be? The greateſt part of my father's eſtate is ſettled on his heir-male; whenever therefore I aſſert my claim as that heir, it muſt be reſtored to me.

*Mrs. Hen.* It will be half the world over before that time. Mr. Edmonds's extravagance is ſuch, that no money can continue long in his poſſeſſion; and for his own ſecurity, he will certainly take care firſt to have the eſtate ſold; which, as he is preſumptive heir, may be done with the help of a little deceit, and he will eaſily contrive, when it is reduced into ſpecie, both portable and current, to prevent your recovering one ſhilling.

*Har.* This is really a very aukward circumſtance; but if my mother enjoys a ſufficient degree of affluence for her life, my own poverty could not afflict me, were it not for one cruel conſequence; it entirely deprives me of all hope of obtaining my Emilia, ſhould fortune ſo far ſtand my friend, as to prevent her marriage with Sir Richard.

*Mrs.*

*Mrs. Hen.* Is it poſſible that in your preſent diſtreſs you can find leiſure to think of your unlucky paſſion for her?

*Har.* My dear Henbury, it is my greateſt diſtreſs. If I could as well bear being deprived of Emilia as of my fortune, you would not ſee me very uneaſy. Her determined obedience to her father, touches me more nearly than all other evils put together. Indeed when I enjoy her preſence, I can feel no other. The happieſt hour I ever paſſed was laſt night, while ſhe was condoling with me on my unfortunate ſituation. The tender affection ſhe expreſſed, charmed me to ſuch a degree, that forgetting all my promiſes, I was on the very point of diſcovering the ſecret of my diſguiſe, and declaring the ardour of my paſſion; when a meſſage from Lord Bruton, by a ſeaſonable interruption, gave me leiſure to recollect myſelf.

*Mrs. Hen.* You did not foreſee how great a loſer you would be by that diſcovery. It is to your diſguiſe that you owe all the innocent, tender, expreſſions of affection that ſo much charm you. Were that removed, determined as ſhe is to obey her father, you could expect only to be avoided when it was poſſible, and when it was not, to be treated with rigor. So far from making any return to your love, her principles would even forbid her liſtening to it.

*Har.* But how tranſient is the pleaſure I receive from her affection! it is ſoon damped by the thought of Sir Richard Luton. When I ſee the time approaching that will give her to his arms, all her af-

fectionate expreſſions, and little tender careſſes, are daggers to my heart. Could I lay aſide my diſguiſe, the friendſhip ſhe now feels might be converted into love, and love is generally ſtrong enough to conquer duty.

*Mrs. Hen.* Not in ſuch a woman as Emilia; you might very probably render her unhappy, but you could not make her diſobedient. I am perſuaded, however painful the taſk, ſhe will always force her heart to conform to her duty. It might prove refractory, but ſhe would rather puniſh, than indulge its ſtubbornneſs.

*Har.* How ſoothing it is to hear juſtice done to thoſe we love! while you increaſe my deſpair, you ſoften it by the praiſe you give to her who is the cauſe of it. Yet might not one be excuſed for quarrelling with merits that deſtroy ones's hopes? But though my happineſs depends on it, I know not how to wiſh her a virtue leſs.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Enter* EMILIA *and* CAROLINE.

MY Emilia! my Caroline! how kind you are!

*Em.* You would have ſeen us two hours ago, my Harriet, might we have indulged our impatience; but we were obliged to make breakfaſt for my father, who I thought would never releaſe us; and to compleat my uneaſineſs we met Lord Leſſingham in our way, who detained us, I thought, an age; but I durſt not leave him and Caroline together, for fear ill luck ſhould bring my father that way.

*Har.* Though I have longed with the utmoſt impatience to ſee you, yet I cannot be ſo ſelfiſh as to repine at your laſt detention; and I dare ſay Caroline and you differ ſo much in the computation of

of time, that ſhe will tell me it was but a few minutes.

*Car.* Indeed I ſhould ſpeak more nearly the truth, were I to ſay ſo; but Emilia's impatience would have thought a ſecond long. Her anxiety for you has neither allowed her any ſleep in the night, nor ony peace ſince ſhe was up. She has not known a word that has been ſaid to her to-day, was more at croſs purpoſes with my father than ever he was with her, and to Lord Leſſingham ſhe was actually rude. It was fortunate for Sir Richard he did not come in her way, ſhe would have forgot the favour of laſt night, which procured him more ſmiles, than be had received from her from the time of their firſt acquaintance. I am ſure the meeting of her this morning muſt be a worſe omen than meeting a hare or a raven.

*Em.* I know not how that might be, but I am ſure a rencontre with a lover is a moſt reviving cordial. How my Caroline's tongue runs this morning! like the lady in the Mock Doctor, ſhe is making herſelf amends for paſt dumbneſs by her preſent volubility. The dumb pulſe is indeed ſeldom a malady of long continuance in our ſex.

*Har.* Thanks to my dear Emilia for her kind anxiety, and thanks to my Caroline for telling it me. By feeling for my ſorrows, Emilia, you diſpel them; nothing can afflict me, that brings with it a proof of the tenderneſs of your friendſhip.

*Car.* To meet a lover is, I allow, beginning a day agreeable enough to make one ſet out in one's courſe with ſome harmony of ſpirits; but I am ſure Lord

Lord Leſſingham ſaid nothing to me half ſo flattering as what Harriet has now addreſſed to you, Emilia. It is a pity you are not a man, Harriet, you would make love prettier than any one breathing. What a loſs her ſex is to you, Emily; what an infinite number of fine things would ſhe whiſper in your ear? we ſhould abſolutely all pine away with envy.

*Em.* I believe, indeed, your lovers would be diſtanced; but, to ſay the truth, it is better as it is; Harriet Edmonds is the moſt amiable of friends, but Harry Edmonds would be the moſt dangerous of lovers. I ſhould not only be ſorry ſhe ſhould change her ſex, but I deſire that my lovers may be as unlike her as poſſible, except it were the man I am to marry: for though I hope always to keep my heart in proper ſubjection to my duty, yet I do not chuſe to have any contention with it. My deſire of victory is not great enough to make me wiſh for a battle.

*Har.* Do you then think, Emilia, that a change in my ſex would alter the nature of your affection? and that you ſhould in that caſe make as perfect a return to my love, as you do to my friendſhip?

*Em.* I cannot anſwer that queſtion with any certainty, there being no point on which I am more ignorant; but I have heard Platonic love ſo exploded by argument, and ſeen it ſo diſgraced by practice, that I have always ſufficiently doubted of its exiſtence, to determine me never to make the experiment. If there is no ſuch thing, either my affection muſt on the preſent ſuppoſition change its nature, or you muſt, by ceaſing to be a woman,

ceaſe

ceaſe to be amiable; and I ſee no reaſon why meerly a change of ſex ſhould have that effect, as all the qualities of mind or heart, for which I eſteem you, would equally pleaſe, whether you were dreſſed in a coat, waiſtcoat, and bag-wig, or a negligee and blond-cap.

*Mrs. Hen.* A bag-wig! then you confine her to that; you don't think ſhe would be equally amiable in a ſhort bob, a ſcratch, or a brigadier?

*Car.* Oh no! every woman would wiſh her lover a little of a beau.

*Har.* Upon my word, Caroline, we are much obliged to Lord Leſſingham for having reſtored you to your natural vivacity. His converſation was certainly peculiarly enlivening this morning.

*Car.* Not if I had as little faith in Platonic love as my ſiſter has; for I ſee no reſource for us but ſoaring into Platonics. He frankly acknowledges he has little hopes of his father's conſent, having been rebuffed in an attempt he has made to gain it; but I am ſo well pleaſed with finding I have not loſt his affection, that I am very ready to riſe to the ſublime, and imagine I can be very happy in my Platoniſm.

*Em.* I believe you could; but depend upon it, Caroline, you will not find the ſame ſublimity in his lordſhip's affections. There is more earth, and leſs ſpirit in the compoſition of man; they are formed of groſſer particles; and you muſt not expect his lordſhip's Platonics to hold out many years, if lord Bruton ſhould continue inexorable.

*Car.*

*Car.* But if love is denied us, you may allow a tender friendſhip to exiſt between us.

*Em.* Yes; when years have robbed you of your charms, and his lordſhip of his paſſions, I will allow you may feel a very ſincere and tender friendſhip for each other, but not till then; for though I ſuppoſe it poſſible before, yet the experiment is too hazardous.

*Har.* I hope you will not be reduced to make the experiment, while it is attended with any hazard; but that Lord Bruton will be brought to conſent to ſo proper an union, and give you leave to love as long as a reaſonable pair can expect: a tender friendſhip may then ſucceed, and be indulged without any danger.

*Mrs. Hen.* And perhaps they will be no loſers by the exchange.

*Har.* Hum — that I don't know.

*Mrs. Hen.* Do'nt you think a calm, mild, clear evening, more agreeable than the ſcorching heat and dazzling brightneſs of a noon-day ſun?

*Har.* No: the ſun enlivens the mind, and gilds every proſpect; it vivifies all nature, and renders noon the moſt glorious part of the day.

*Em.* Each has its charms; but I am of Mrs. Henbury's opinion, I think the ſerenity of a fine evening is moſt agreeable.

*Car.*

*Car.* I agree with you. A riſing ſun is a charming object, whereas in its meridian it dazzles one's eyes, and renders one too blind to ſee it at all.

*Har.* I might more eaſily be brought over to your ſide of the queſtion, if evening were not ſo frequently attended by damps and chilling breezes.

*Car.* Oh! but we exclude all ſuch things from our evening.

*Mrs. Hen.* I fear then your evenings are as little to be found as the conſtant brightneſs of a meridian ſun. I find you are all unreaſonable. Nothing can properly regulate our expectations, but the experience gained by frequent diſappointments.

*Car.* May our Inexperience then remain as long as poſſible; wiſdom is too dearly purchaſed by diſappointments.

*Mrs. Hen.* That may be, but we are not free to chuſe whether we will make the purchaſe or not, it is a commodity forced upon us.

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Serv.* Lord Bruton, madam, deſires leave to wait upon you.

*Har.* Lord Bruton, why ſhould he viſit me?

*Mrs. Hen.* That you can learn only from himſelf,

ſelf, but receive him by all means; perhaps he may be attempting a reconcilation between you and your father.

*Har.* That would be an obligation indeed; and I think in ſome ſort he owes it me. Deſire him to walk up.

*Em.* We will leave you, and return when you are more at leiſure.

*Har.* Don't go away, rather take this opportunity of bringing him acquainted with Miſs Caroline; her very appearance will juſtify his ſon, and may turn out to their mutual benefit.

*Car.* As high as you thought my ſpirits, they are not equal to ſuch an interview. His preſence would diſconcert me extremely. I am ſenſible I cannot ſtand the ſcrutinizing obſervations of one who will behold me with a prejudice in my diſfavour. If I can paſs uncenſured by the impartial, it is as much as I can expect. Therefore, adieu, my dear Harriet.

*Em.* Good morrow, my dear; may his lordſhip's viſit prove uſeful to you.

*Har.* It ought to produce a conſiderable benefit, to compenſate for the preſent mortification it gives me, by depriving me of my dear friends.

[*Exeunt Em. Car. and Mrs. Henbury.*

SCENE.

## SCENE IV.

*Enter Lord* BRUTON.

HARRIET.

YOUR lordſhip does me an unexpected honour.

*Lord Bru.* You have a right, madam, to expect every kind of reſpect that can be paid you; even our adoration, if you will accept them.

*Har.* My ambition falls very ſhort of ſuch expectations, my lord, and you will oblige me if you will forbear thoſe very high compliments, as I cannot ſuppoſe your lordſhip gave yourſelf this trouble only to flatter me.

*Lord Bru.* My motive for waiting on you, madam, was to beg pardon for the part I have unintentionally had in cauſing your difference with Sir Jeffery; and to make ſome apology for my ſon, who, I fear, gave you reaſon to doubt his affection; and by, at leaſt the coldneſs of his addreſs, determined

mined you to refuſe your hand to a man who ſo little deſerv'd you.

*Har.* If I have any reaſon to find fault with Lord Leſſingham, it is for the too great aſſiduity of his addreſs. It might do him honour as a ſon; but as in my opinion ſincerity and juſtice to the woman he intended to marry, are as great duties as obedience to a father, I cannot think he did much honour to his integrity, in endeavouring to perſuade me of his affections, when another woman was miſtreſs of his heart.

*Lord Bru.* He might perhaps have had a prior attachment; but it is impoſſible that a man who has ſeen you, can love any other woman.

*Har.* If your lordſhip knew Miſs Caroline Martin, even your exceſs of politeneſs could not lead you to hazard ſo unmerited a compliment; for I aſſure you ſhe is very much my ſuperior in every thing that can captivate the heart of man. I ſhould have had a bad opinion of Lord Leſſingham's taſte, had he not given her the preference: and though I have a right to complain of his pretending love to me, as it might have betrayed me into an union with a man who muſt have accepted me with reluctance, yet your lordſhip has reaſon to be greatly pleaſed with his behaviour, as few ſons have given ſo ſtrong a proof of filial obedience.

*Lord Bru.* As for his obedience, I know pretty well in what eſtimation to hold it; he is ſenſible that my fortune is in my power, and when that is the caſe, few ſons are undutiful. It is entails and ſettlements that make them refractory.

*Har.*

*Har.* Surely your lordſhip judges too ſeverely of your ſon's conduct; I cannot but think the deſire of obliging you was his ſtrongeſt motive; for he could ſcarcely imagine you could be offended at his attachment to a woman every way ſo amiable and deſerving as Miſs Martin.

*Lord Bru.* Why look you, my dear madam, the moſt neceſſary qualification for my lord's wife is a large fortune; ſuch an one would appear to me both amiable and deſerving, though I had not taken the trouble of examining into her natural qualities; but a poor angel could not be approved by me. I have a right to chuſe on different principles for myſelf. My fortune is my own, and I am under no neceſſity of endeavouring to increaſe it. Love is my deity, and by his irreſiſtable power I ſwear, that I would prefer the poſſeſſion of this dear hand (taking Harriet's hand) to the greateſt fortune in the univerſe.

*Har.* I find your lordſhip is deſirous of making me amends, for the neglect of which you imagine your ſon was guilty; but you may be aſſured it is unneceſſary, as I have declared he performed his part but too well for the credit of his probity.

*Lord Bru.* No, my angel, it is not by way of amends for the deficiency of another, but in obedience to the dictates of my heart, that I profeſs myſelf devoted to you. I adored you from the firſt moment I beheld you; and I ſhould have convinced you by the moſt ſerious addreſs of the power your charms had over me, had not I felt a reluctance to being the rival of my ſon.

*Har.*

*Har.* Were your lordſhip a younger man, you would ſurprize me, by declaring ſo ſudden a paſſion. Nothing appears to me more idle than thoſe inſtantaneous impreſſions even on the youngeſt heart; but ſurely, my lord, at your time of day, a man muſt have more ſtrength and ſobriety of judgment, than to be liable to ſuch follies.

*Lord Bru.* My dear girl, you miſtake the point extremely, mine is the only age when ſo ſudden a paſſion is not a folly. Experience has taught me a quick diſcernment of a woman's merit. A man much younger than myſelf ſees not beyond externals; he perceives clearly the features of the face, but he does not in them diſcover the features of the mind; and though a man much older might have the diſcernment of experience, yet love would be a folly in him, becauſe he could not expect a return.

*Har.* So—his lordſhip thinks himſelf mighty amiable then.—I wonder at what age he ſuppoſes a man ceaſes to be ſo. [*Aſide.*] I don't doubt but there is much ſolidity in your lordſhip's reaſoning, therefore I ſhall not diſpute the propriety of your conceiving a ſudden paſſion, but from part of your own argument I can convince you of the folly of chuſing me for its object, by aſſuring your lordſhip, that I cannot poſſibly return it.

*Lord Bru.* My dear child, the choice of the object is not in our power. Your charms obtruded themſelves upon me involuntarily, and let me die if it is in my power to ceaſe to adore you; I muſt do ſo till the laſt hour of my life.

*Ha.*

*Har.* That would be a lamentable degree of conſtancy, my lord. It is pity your lordſhip's experience did not enable you to diſcover the obduracy of my heart in the features of my face, it might, by killing all hope, have prevented this gigantic paſſion from making ſo quick a progreſs. Really, the moſt inexperienced novice could not have fallen into a worſe ſcrape. But wiſdom will nod ſometimes, your lordſhip was certainly in a profound nap, when your heart received ſo deep an impreſſion.

*Lord Bru.* You may treat my paſſion as a jeſt, madam, and think what I have ſaid is no more than common-place gallantry; but upon my ſoul I am ſerious. I love you to the utmoſt exceſs of paſſion; I adore you. Put my love to any trial you pleaſe; nothing can yield me ſo much happineſs as doing you ſervice. Command me in any way you chuſe; there is nothing ſo difficult but I will perform it with pleaſure.

*Har.* The offer is really worthy of a knight-errant; but I have no taſk to impoſe on your love, as I cannot by a return of affection reward the performance. I could propoſe an eſſential ſervice to your lordſhip's generoſity and compaſſion, if you would from thoſe motives undertake it.

*Lord Bru.* Only point it out to me and believe it done. Speak it my angel; you will confer an eternal obligation by honouring me with your commands.

*Har.* I need not tell your lordſhip, that my uncle

cle has great influence over my father; if you would uſe the intereſt friendſhip gives you with the one, and your rank may entitle you to with the other, to effect a reconciliation between me and my father, I ſhould be moſt eſſentially obliged to you. Surely ſuch an advocate might obtain my pardon.

*Lord Bru.* I will tell you, my angel, how it may be done at once; give me leave to ſay you have promis'd to bleſs me with your hand; ſuch a reparation of the offence which has exaſperated them, cannot fail of obtaining forgiveneſs.

*Har.* Now my lord, though I anxiouſly deſire to be reſtored to my father's favour, yet I would not purchaſe the bleſſing by a falſhood.

*Lord Bru.* I did not mean you ſhould, my deareſt creature; no, make it truth, and thereby render me the happieſt fellow in the world.

*Har.* That would not be a means of making either your lordſhip or myſelf happy. Believe me it would anſwer neither of our purpoſes. Were I to agree to what you propoſe, there would be ſomething new in the denouement of my adventures; to be baniſhed my father's houſe for refuſing to marry a pretty young lord, and reſtored to it by marrying his father. No one could doubt but I was well rewarded for the vexation I had endured.

*Lord Bru.* There is ſomething very fooliſh in the relative terms of father and ſon, they are apt to excite falſe ideas. Though there muſt be a good many years difference in their ages, yet various things

things may take off from the conſequences of that indifference. Some men are older at thirty, than others at fifty; it is by the perſon and manners, and not by the pariſh regiſter, that we ſhould eſtimate people's ages. I have known many men to whom I might have been father, who ought to have been conſidered as my ſeniors, if we had proper notions of youth and age; therefore, my angel, don't imagine I am old becauſe I am a father.

*Har.* I give your lordſhip my word, I do not, I would as ſoon marry you now, as if you were but five and twenty; if I have any objection of that ſort to make, it is, that you are too juvenile. But the *anno domini* of your birth is of no importance in this affair. I have ſtronger reaſons for not accepting the honour your lordſhip offers me; therefore, if I can obtain your interceſſion in my favour on no other terms, I muſt be contented to relinquiſh all hopes of it.

*Lord Bru.* You would have more reaſon to complain of that, my lovely girl, if you were not bent on depriving me of hope; but I can tell you I am an obſtinate fellow, I would as ſoon part with my life as with my hopes; and to ſhew that I have ſome dependance on your generoſity, I will ſerve you to the beſt of my power; and truſt to you for my reward.

*Har.* If your lordſhip expects any ſuch reward, as you hint at, I beg you will not ſerve me: for you rate your ſervices at too high a price: but I imagined you would have thought it a kind of duty to endeavour to redreſs the evil, which you have had a great ſhare in bringing upon me.

*Lord*

*Lord Bru.* I have offered you the beſt amends in my power, but I ſubmit to your commands, and will endeavour to ſerve you from juſtice, ſince you will not allow me the more pleaſing motive of hope. — [*Aſide.*] The devil take me if I do though; ſucceſs would ill anſwer my views; if ſhe will not liſten to my propoſals now that ſhe is diſtreſſed, I ſhould certainly be rejected, were ſhe again received at home. If ſhe could be brought to marry me, there is no doubt of her father's approbation, with all its convenient conſequences.——[*Aloud.*] Well, what ſay you? my angel! will you give me leave to try my influence?

*Har.* If your lordſhip is ſufficiently diſintereſted to do it from generoſity, I need not repeat, that I ſhould be ſincerely grateful, for ſo great an obligation.

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Serv.* Mr. Henbury, madam, deſires to ſpeak with you.

*Har.* Shew him into the parlour. I am very ſorry, my lord, that I am called away by buſineſs.

*Lord Bru.* Uſe no ceremony with me, my lovely girl. I leave you; you will permit me to acquaint you with my ſucceſs.

*Har.* Your lordſhip will oblige me.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

## SCENE V.

SCENE CHANGES TO SIR JEFFERY'S HOUSE.

*Lady* EDMONDS, *Sir* JEFFERY, *Mr.* EDMONDS.

*Lady* EDMONDS.

I Am told, Sir Jeffery, but I cannot poſſibly believe it, that you deſign leaving Tunbridge this afternoon.

*Sir Jeff.* [*Aſide to Mr. Edmonds.*] What ſhall I ſay?

*Mr. Ed.* Acknowledge it boldly.

[*Aſide to Sir Jeffery.*

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* Yes, I do deſign it, and what of that?

*Lady Ed.* In the preſent ſtate of our domeſtic affairs, I did not imagine you would have left the place; and leſs did I ſuppoſe you would have done it in ſo ſecret a manner, and to the affliction you are ſenſible I muſt be under for the loſs of my daughter, add the unkindneſs of a huſband.

*Sir Jeff.* Heyday! am I to aſk your leave to go to London?

*Lady Ed.* No, ſurely; but might I not reaſonably hope you would order me to accompany you?

*Mr. Ed.* My dear madam, that would have been giving you an unreaſonable trouble. Sir Jeffery's ſtay will not be long; it is therefore little worth while to remove you from a place, which is at this time of the year ſo much more agreeable than London. Beſide, the uneaſineſs Miſs Edmonds's conduct has given my brother, renders it deſirable for him to ſeek relief from a change of place as ſpeedily as poſſible; and a lady's journey requires a long preparation.

*Lady Ed.* I am ſo far from preferring this place to any other, that wherever my huſband is, will always appear to me the moſt eligible abode; and to ſhew you that no long preparation is neceſſary for me, I will very readily accompany Sir Jeffery to London this Afternoon, or even the next hour, if he will give me leave.

*Sir Jeff.* But if ſo be, that in caſe I chuſe to go alone, you muſt ſtay here. Cannot I ſtir without having you at my elbow? You will be putting me on leading ſtrings preſently, I ſuppoſe.

*Lady Ed.* But, Sir Jeffery, what buſineſs have I at Tunbridge? I came hither only to attend you. My health does not require the waters, nor is my mind in a ſtate capable of ſharing the amuſements of the place.

*Mr. Ed.* I dare ſay, madam, Sir Jeffery will have no objection to your ladyſhip's going to your country-ſeat.

*Lady Ed.* I ſhould be glad, Sir, to receive my anſwer from Sir Jeffery.

*Sir Jeff.* Why, if ſo be you have it from my brother, it is all one, he knows my mind.

*Lady Ed.* I believe he does, becauſe he regulates it by his own.

*Mr. Ed.* Nay, my dear madam, now you do me too much honour; my brother knows he has always governed me entirely, and indeed I have through life felt the benefit of being under his prudent direction.

*Sir Jeff.* So I have, my lady, he has always been a very dutiful brother to me; I have always governed him, as one may ſay, with a wet finger, and I believe he never had cauſe to repent it: perhaps

haps ſome people may be briſker and more witty than I; but I am prudent, very prudent, a judicious adviſer, brother.

*Mr. Ed.* Indeed I have always had the good fortune to find you ſo, Sir Jeffery; you think deeply, ſolidly.

*Sir Jeff.* Ay, I am none of your flaſhy fellows; I love to go to the bottom of things, brother.

*Lady Ed.* All this is little to my purpoſe. Dear Sir Jeffery, permit me to accompany you.

*Sir Jeff.* Once for all, my lady, I will not, brother and I will travel comfortably together, without being troubled with fiddle faddle women.

*Lady Ed.* Give me leave to follow you then.

*Sir Jeff.* That I won't, and if ſo be, that, in caſe you pretend to come after me, I won't ſee you, I can tell you that; I will order the ſervants not to let you in. What, do you think there will not be people enough in London, if ſo be you don't thruſt yourſelf there.

*Lady Ed.* But conſider, my dear, in how difficult a ſituation you leave me. Should my poor Harriet beg pardon for her diſobedience, and ſeek a reconciliation, I ſhall not know how to act in your abſence. What anſwer can I give her, without your ſanction!

*Mr. Ed.* [*Aſide to Sir Jeffery.*] She is endea-

vouring to pump you, and wants to find out how long Harriet may venture to perſiſt in diſobedience. You muſt diſclaim all future connections with her.

*Sir Jeff.* Why look you, wife, if in caſe ſhe does, it is eaſy enough for you to know how to act. If ſo be ſhe promiſes to marry Lord Leſſingham, ſend me word, but if ſo be ſhe does not, a fig for all ſhe can ſay, I will have nothing more to do with her; and you muſt ſend her word ſo; and refuſe to hear any more from her, or to let her ſpeak to you; I ſhall take care ſhe ſhall never be the better for me; there are lawyers enough in London to make that ſure enough.

*Lady Ed.* Since, ſir, you can be ſo much impoſed upon by your worſt enemy, concealment is no longer of uſe; and, whatever may be the conſequence to myſelf, I muſt tell you, that in Harriet you ſee your ſon and heir; no daughter, but a ſon, your only ſon.

*Sir Jeff.* How! Harriet turned into a man! Have I then a Son! a Son! an heir to my eſtate and title!

*Mr. Ed.* This is a ſtranger metamorphoſis than any in Ovid. Be not impoſed upon, brother. This is the moſt impudent bare-faced fiction I ever heard. I beg your pardon, madam, the expreſſion may be harſh, but the impoſition is too atrocious. [*Aſide.*] Is it poſſible my curſed ſtars could play me ſuch a trick as this!

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* You may take what liberty you pleaſe, Sir. I can excuſe the effects of ſo ſevere a diſappointment. To find all your views fruſtrated, may well touch you nearly; but the pleaſure I receive from it is a ſufficient conſolation under all the abuſe you can beſtow on me.

*Sir Jeff.* But how can Harriet be a boy, my lady? ſhe has been a girl ever ſince ſhe was born; the midwife told me ſo when ſhe firſt came into the world.

*Lady Ed.* It is true, Sir, you were told ſo, and I am bound to aſk your pardon for the deceit, to which nothing could have induced me but the anxious deſire of preſerving to you the life of one ſon, out of ſo many as I had brought, and which I was well convinced, I could no otherwiſe effect; and I flattered myſelf, that the happy conſequence would excuſe the fault.

*Mr. Ed.* Sir Jeffery, madam, is not ſo weak as you imagine him; you have always thought yourſelf ſo much his ſuperior in underſtanding, that you could impoſe on him as much as you pleaſed, but you now ſtrain the point too far; he has ſagacity enough to ſee through all your arts; and well knows, that how capricious ſoever your ſex may be, you are not whimſical enough to breed up boys as girls.

*Lady Ed.* Mr. Edmonds, caprice never made a part of my character; my motive was juſt, prudent, and laudable; and when that is known, *you*,

I am ſure, cannot in your conſcience call it whimſical.

*Mr. Ed.* You could have but one motive, madam, and I think I do not ſpeak in harſh terms, when I call whimſical the deſire of mortifying your huſband, for almoſt twenty years, with the belief, that he had no ſon to ſucceed him in his honours and his fortune. Moſt people would call ſuch an action by a worſe name; they would think you took a daily joy in his vexation: but I have a better opinion of *you*, and am therefore convinced you are now only practiſing a little feminine deceit; and perhaps the tenderneſs of the mother may be ſome excuſe for the falſeneſs of the woman. But believe me Sir Jeffery ſees through your arts; indeed they could not impoſe on an ideot. Harriet a man, no, no.

*Sir Jeff.* Indeed I am afraid not; for if ſo be ſhe were, why ſhould you make a ſecret of it?

*Lady Ed.* This is not a proper time to tell my reaſon, but you ſhall ſoon be acquainted with it.

*Mr. Ed.* Ay, ay, put off the evil day. You think if you can get her received again into the houſe under this pretence, you will together be able to trump up ſome ſtory that will obtain her forgiveneſs.

*Sir Jeff.* But that will not do; I can tell you that I will know all, before I will ſee *her*, or forgive *you*, if ſo be I ever do at all.

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* If it muſt be ſo then, I no longer heſitate to declare, that this worſt of men, this deceitful brother of yours, was ſo diligent in removing out of his way every male-child we had, that no one might ſtand between him and the ſucceſſion, that I had no other means of preſerving this laſt of my children, but concealing its ſex, and thus eluding the effects of his avarice and malice.

*Mr. Ed.* Good heavens! is it poſſible ſo wicked a heart can be concealed under ſo ſweet a countenance! Can any one harbour ſuch deep malice unprovoked! I will ſay more, againſt the man who has ever loved her, who has carefully concealed all her faults, and weakneſſes from an unſuſpecting huſband! and am I thus rewarded! accuſed of murdering my dear brother's children! wicked, wicked woman!

*Sir Jeff.* Wicked indeed, and deviliſh, to accuſe my poor brother of ſuch crimes, when I am ſure he was as ſorry for the death of every child as I was; nay, he cried a great deal more, and has often ſaid, that money can give him no pleaſure, ſince I have no ſons to inherit it.

*Mr. Ed.* The juſtice I owe to my own innocence requires, that I ſhould mention ſuſpicions, but too well grounded, which hitherto I have concealed within my own breaſt; and indeed in ſpite of glaring proofs, could ſcarcely believe, as I could not conceive any motive that ſhould tempt a mother to deſtroy her own offspring; but I now ſee it was done only with an intent of hereafter accuſing me

of the crime, to deprive me of the friendſhip of a brother whom I have always loved with a tenderneſs of affection which ſhe cannot forgive.

*Sir Jeff.* Oh! wicked, wicked woman! to injure my poor dear brother ſo! If the children did not die a natural death, it muſt have been your own doing, to ſpite me, and abuſe my brother. Out of my ſight, wicked creature.

*Lady Ed.* I ſhall not diſpute your will, Sir, in that reſpect, I am too indifferent about myſelf to be much concerned what becomes of me; but do not be perſuaded to throw away the bleſſing you have always longed for. Act as you pleaſe towards me; but receive to your arms a ſon who will give pleaſure to your future days, whoſe talents will do honour to his family, and whoſe excellent diſpoſition renders him every thing a parent can deſire.

*Mr. Ed.* Is it poſſible, madam, you can perſiſt in your endeavour to impoſe ſuch a falſhood on your huſband? Why will you puſh on your own ruin? I would willigly have contented myſelf with diſproving your aſſertion in regard to Harriet's ſex, but you will reduce me to the neceſſity of producing indiſputable evidence, that ſhe is no child of my brother's; and whatever be her ſex, ſhould apply for proviſion to her real father.

*Lady Ed.* What can the villain mean by ſuch an aſperſion!

*Sir Jeff.* How is this! No child of mine! Why, what

what is that you ſay, brother? could my wife dare to cuckold me?

*Mr. Ed.* There is nothing in ſuch an action, brother, beyond the daring of many a timorous woman; it requires no great heroiſm. As I thought ignorance in this point was conducive to your happineſs, I ſhould not have acquainted you with it, if ſhe had not in this manner forced me to it.

*Sir Jeff.* You have indeed ſometimes given me a kind, friendly hint, of ſuch a thing; but I could never believe it. Cuckold me! Oh! you vile creature! to uſe me ſo! do I look as if I were made for a cuckold? Oh! you wicked ſtrumpet.

*Lady Ed.* The amazing impudence and malice of ſuch a charge ſtuns me; I did not think it poſſible for any man to be ſo conſummate in villany and impudence, as to dare to utter to my face ſo falſe, ſo infamous an accuſation.

*Mr. Ed.* I make no doubt but your ladyſhip is ſtunned and confounded at finding yourſelf diſcovered; but an humbler ſtile would better ſuit you. I can bring ſuch proof of the truth of what I have ſaid, as will ſoon deprive you of all power of denying it; though I confeſs your ladyſhip's aſſurance might well deſerve the epithet you ſo politely laviſh on me.

*Sir Jeff.* Out of my ſight, thou impudent ſtrumpet; out of my ſight, vile wretch; I will expoſe thy ſhame to all the world; begone, I ſay.

*Lady*

*Lady Ed.* I obey you, Sir, nor am I under any apprehenſion but you will ſoon be undeceived; levity and imprudence may ſometimes expoſe innocence to unjuſt cenſure, and falſe appearances may render it difficult to be cleared up; but my conduct has been ſuch, that I defy the moſt infernal malice to prove even the ſhadow of ſuch a crime on me. That bad man may accuſe me in words, but he can find no action in my life, that the moſt malevolent can conſtrue even into the appearance of guilt.

*Mr. Ed.* Silent acquieſcence, madam, in Sir Jeffery's command, would bear more of the appearance of innocence, than the boldeſt defence.

*Lady Ed.* My acquieſcence in a command that will deliver me from the ſight of ſo deteſtable an object as yourſelf, is an eaſy exertion of obedience. I do not wonder that my preſence is odious to you; but be aſſured there is a Being whoſe preſence ought to confound you far more than mine, who will not ſuffer ſuch attrocious villany to paſs unpuniſhed. I go, Sir, but depend upon it, the vengeance of heaven will ere long revenge the great, the cruel injuries, with which you have oppreſſed an unhappy woman. Tremble at the thought of him who ſees all your actions with abhorrence, and is all-powerful to puniſh them. [*Exit.*

*Mr. Ed.* [*Aſide.*] Why will my nerves obey her? I do indeed tremble: ſtrange and laſting effects of youthful prejudices.

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* This is a ſad affliction, brother; that ever I ſhould live to be a cuckold!

*Mr. Ed.* Let it not diſturb you, Sir Jeffery; your caſe is not uncommon. If the world proceeds in the ſame courſe as it has done of late years, cuckoldom will ſoon be an eſſential part of the *bon ton*; there will be no making a tolerable figure in high life without it.

*Sir Jeff.* But are you ſure, brother, that my lady has really defiled my bed? Who was her paramour? I have been trying to fix upon ſome body; but I proteſt ſhe has carried it ſo cunningly, that I cannot gueſs.

*Mr. Ed.* Excuſe me, Sir Jeffery, from telling you any particulars till we get to London, where all my proofs are; for as the ſubject is not very agreeable, it will be beſt to finiſh it all at once. [*Aſide.*] Prolific as my invention is, ſome time is neceſſary for me to compoſe a tale, that will appear credible, even to this credulous dolt.

*Sir Jeff.* Have you proof enough to get me a divorce? I am reſolved I will be divorced?

*Mr. Ed.* That is a faſhionable ſtep to be ſure; but I confeſs, except damages can be obtained, I don't think it anſwers: it is a licence to your wife to marry her lover, who may the more readily conſent to it from a reaſonable belief that ſhe will give him an opportunity of ſhaking off the marriage-fetters in the like manner, as ſoon as they are tired of each other, and when infamy becomes common, there

there are women who will think they are gainers by loſing character and huſband together.

*Sir Jeff.* Then you would adviſe me againſt a divorce?

*Mr. Ed.* I think ſo; but we will diſcuſs that point more fully when we get to town. Let us go finiſh the neceſſary orders for our departure, that we may ſet off as ſoon as dinner is over.

*Sir Jeff.* I have not much to do. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

SCENE CHANGES TO HARRIET'S LODGING.

HARRIET *and Lord* BRUTON.

*Lord* BRUTON.

HAVE wealth and titles then no charms for you?

*Har.* Yes; a reaſonable ſhare, my lord; I do not idolize them, but I am not inſenſible of their real value. Riches have a thouſand agreeable properties; judiciouſly uſed they afford various pleaſures, and give us thoſe inumerable, nameleſs, indulgences,

dulgences, which, tho' not neceſſary, it is more agreeable to enjoy, than to be deprived of. Rank and titles have always appeared to me deſirable on account of the value they ſtamp on every civility we beſtow. What in a private gentlewoman is only conſidered as neceſſary complaiſance, without which, no one would endure her ſociety, is received as a favour from a woman of quality; and ſhe might highly oblige half the world by the ſmiles and ſlender courteſies, which we ſquander away to no purpoſe.

*Lord Bru.* You have a right to ridicule the advantages of titles; beauty gives a ſuperiority more generally acknowledged, and more aſſiduouſly courted; but rank certainly has its value.

*Har.* I proteſt I don't mean to ridicule it. The deſire of pleaſing is natural, and we are perhaps never more gratified, than when we oblige; I am therefore ſerious, when I ſay, I think titles valuable, as the means of doing both with the greateſt eaſe. I have always thought the power of conferring favours by every word or look, a great privilege; and though perhaps they have not ſo much influence on ſuperior as on little minds, yet their general uſe renders them deſirable; they are the current coin of ſociety, and as in our common expences though bank-notes contain much in a ſmall compaſs, get gold and ſilver-coin are moſt neceſſary, as we have continual calls for them; ſo though by our virtues only we can gain the eſteem of the few excellent, yet the multitude, thoſe with whom our moſt conſtant intercourſe muſt be, may be won by eaſy condeſcenſions and little courteſies.

*Lord*

*Lord Bru.* Since then you allow the value of wealth and title, why will you not accept them?

*Har.* I grant them deſirable, but not neceſſary, my lord; I can do very well without them; and find myſelf more inclined to forgo the indulgences they beſtow, and to let my complaiſance go unnotized and unprized, than to enter into the very ſerious connection your lordſhip propoſes. Hymen's fetters are too heavy for me.

*Lord Bru.* Can they be heavy to a woman who is adored by her huſband? The happineſs of your life would be the whole ſtudy and endeavour of mine. I love you with that exceſs of paſſion, that I can find no pleaſure but in pleaſing you.

*Har.* Your lordſhip's paſſion has been of very quick growth; to riſe to exceſs in leſs than two days acquaintance, ſpeaks an incredible progreſs.

*Lord Bru.* I grant it unreaſonably ſudden; but if it be abſurd, you muſt lay the blame on your charms, their irreſiſtible power bears down reaſon, caution, prudence, and every thing that ſhould defend the heart againſt ſo ſudden, and ſo violent an impreſſion.

*Har.* As your lordſhip allows that extraordinary power was neceſſary to produce ſo immediate an effect, you cannot much wonder if the like impreſſion has not been made on my heart; therefore will not expect a return to ſo uncommon a paſſion.

*Lord Bru.* I do not expect it, my angel. I can hope to obtain your heart only by the ſincerity, the tender aſſiduity of my love; I now therefore only apply to your prudence; and if from that I can obtain your hand, I flatter myſelf my conduct will in time gain, as I am ſure it will deſerve, your affections.

*Har.*

*Har.* Upon my word, my lord, I am in doubt whether prudence is ever a proper motive to marriage; I queſtion whether it can be prudent for a perſon to put her happineſs out of her own power, except affection renders the ſociety of the perſon to whom ſhe commits it very neceſſary to the peace of her mind.

*Lord Bru.* I never was bigotted to the ſtate of matrimony, I muſt confeſs, madam, but in ſome caſes I think it prudent. Is it not ſo to procure to one's ſelf eaſe and affluence? Is it not prudent in a young lady, who has offended her parents, to obtain their forgiveneſs? Both theſe effects you muſt be ſenſible will be the conſequence of your conſent to become mine; and on theſe conſiderations I build my hopes of your favour. Some little expectations too I form from your good nature; can you determine to doom to wretchedneſs a man who ſo ſincerely loves you?

*Har.* Can I ſuppoſe your lordſhip thinks it any great misfortune to be deprived of the object of your wiſhes, when you inflict the like ſuffering on your ſon? He is of an age when the paſſions are ſtronger, and the heart more tender; his affections have had time to be deeply rooted by a pretty long acquaintance with the object. His caſe therefore muſt be more deſperate than yours.

*Lord Bru.* That is impoſſible. However, I will allow that the heart of youth, and long acquaintance with the lady, may have had a ſtrong effect as your ſuperior charms, and put us on a level; but how then can you plead for him, while you

you are deaf to me? He has the inconſtancy of youth on his ſide; levity will bring that relief to him which I cannot hope.

*Har.* Age gives to lovers a happy ſubſtitute to the levity of which years have deprived them, even inſenſibility: thus time brings with it as certain a cure as it takes away; but that your lordſhip may not charge me with injuſtice, if you will give your conſent to your ſon's marriage with Miſs Caroline Martin, I will promiſe at the expiration of the next three months to marry your lordſhip, if you ſhall then chuſe it.

*Lord Bru.* Three months is an age.

*Har.* I may, poſſibly, put it to your lordſhip's choice in leſs than as many weeks; but as our acquaintance is of ſo late a date, I think it adviſeable, that we ſhould each have the liberty of three months conſideration, if we chuſe to make uſe of it. Now, my lord, you can have no reaſon to charge me with cruelty; the terms I propoſe are not hard ones. Miſs Caroline's fortune is not deſpicable, though Lord Leſſingham might, no doubt, obtain a better; but he muſt then expect to make more than a proportionable abatement in the merit of the lady. Now, if you will not conſent, it is you who refuſe me.

*Lord Bru.* You place my happineſs at too great a diſtance; temptations to be very alluring ought to be preſent, or at leaſt very near: abridge the term to one month.

*Har.* Well, my lord, to prove my readineſs to compleat

compleat the agreement, at one month's diſtance I will be your lordſhip's wife, if you will accept me as ſuch; but then you muſt give your immediate conſent to the union of the two lovers.

*Lord Bru.* But how ſhall I be ſure that when that point is gained you will perform your part of the engagement? Pardon the ſuſpicions of an ardent, but timorous, lover.

*Har.* I think your lordſhip might have truſted to my honour; however, I cannot complain that you are not ſo infatuated with your paſſion, as to be deprived of all prudent caution; and to ſecure my performance, will give a promiſe under my hand, if in exchange you will give me the conſent agreed upon, under yours.

*Lord Bru.* I can refuſe no conditions which will procure me ſo great a bleſſing. Let this be a proof of the ſincerity of my love, and of the abſolute power you have over me.——Here is pen, ink, and paper; I am ready to execute the agreement.—— I can never think myſelf too ſoon aſſured of my lovely Harriet. [*They both write.*] There is my conſent in due form.

*Har.* [*Takes the paper and reads.*] "In obedience to the idol of my ſoul, I hereby give under my hand, my conſent to my ſon, Lord Leſſingham, to marry Miſs Caroline Martin, whenever he ſhall chuſe it. Witneſs my hand, BRUTON." [*Aſide.*] A note worthy of Lord Foppington; ſtap my vitals. [*Aloud.*] Very well, my lord, and there is my promiſe.

*Lord Bru.* [*Takes the paper and reads*] "I hereby

hereby promiſe, at the expiration of a month from the date hereof, to marry the Earl of Bruton, if he ſhall then think my hand worth his acceptance. Witneſs my hand, HARRIET EDMONDS." Thanks, a thouſand thanks to my lovely, my adorable girl, you have exalted me to felicity, let thoſe dear lips ſeal the promiſe.

[*Offers to ſalute her.*

*Har.* No, my lord, no man ever yet kiſſed them; and I am determined to be able to ſay the ſame on my wedding-day.

*Lord Bru.* This hand then muſt make me ſome compenſation.

[*Takes her hand and kiſſes it.*]

*Har.* Not very willingly, my lord; this is all foollery. Till the day of performance comes, I muſt have no demands made on credit; I will, in the mercantile phraſe, honour my note; but I ſhall not allow that it gives any claims before the time of payment.

*Lord Bru.* Oh! fye, my angel! why all this prudery? and how could you in this dear note inſert words which implied a poſſibility of my not chuſing to demand the performance? Can man quarrel with his happineſs?

*Har.* Oh! yes, my lord, he does it every day. It is true, he perhaps does not juſt then perceive it is his happineſs, a blindneſs, which at one time or other, ſeizes us all; but a paſſion ſo ſudden as your lordſhip's, may very naturally be as quick in its decay as in its riſe; therefore, it would have been unreaſonable

reaſonable not to have ſhewn a readineſs to admit of its extinction.

*Lord Bru.* You would admit of an impoſſibility then; you have kindled a fire in my breaſt that nothing can extinguiſh.

*Har.* That is much too. —— Is it as pure, as well as laſting, as the Veſtal's fire? for material fires are generally ſubject to a pretty quick decay.

*Lord Bru.* Mine is an exception; you will find it as laſting as my life; feeble fires may ſoon die, but a love like mine, death alone can extinguiſh.

*Har.* Fair promiſes, my lord, but difficult to fulfil. I flatter myſelf your lordſhip will not take amiſs my informing you that ſome buſineſs at preſent requires my attention, and will not allow me to enjoy longer your lordſhip's company.

*Lord Bru.* I cannot take it ill; for if you did not remind me of the neceſſity of departing, I ſhould never recollect it; ſo impoſſible is it to quit voluntarily your preſence and converſation: but I take my leave, and hope before the day is over you will permit me to renew my viſit.

*Har.* The ſituation we are in, in regard to each other, renders it improbable I ſhould deny your lordſhip that permiſſion.

*Lord Bru.* Adieu, madam, I ſhall live on anticipation, till I again wait on you.

*Har.*

*Har.* Your ſervant, my lord. [*Exit Lord Bruton.*] Ha, ha, ha, was ever ſo ſublime, ſo paſſionate a lover! I can anticipate too, and amuſe myſelf with imagining his lordſhip's diſconcerted countenance, when he finds his fair miſtreſs, his gentle Dulcinea, metamorphoſed into a ſpirited young fellow; ha, ha, ha.

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

*Enter Mrs.* HENBURY.

*Mrs.* HENBURY.

WHAT in the name of wonder can occaſion this overflowing of mirth? it can be no common occurrence ſurely that can have an effect ſo contrary from what in your ſituation might be expected. If I were not afraid of diſgracing your ſex, of the honour of which you are ſo tenacious, I ſhould believe you in hyſterics.

*Har.* You would be miſtaken; for I aſſure you my mirth is true and genuine.

*Mrs. Hen.* Lord Bruton muſt have been very good company; I was afraid his long viſit would have tired you.

*Har*

*Har.* It certainly was long enough to have tired a more patient perſon; but it has ended well; he has gone away happy, pho —— happy is too cold a term —— enraptured —— and of the ſtate of mind wherein he has left me, you will not form a very melancholy idea.

*Mrs. Hen.* Pray how came you ſo very agreeable to each other?

*Har.* As his lordſhip's rank and joy are both ſuperior to mine, I muſt give him the precedency, and firſt acquaint you with the cauſe of his raptures. Be it known unto you then, that I have given him a promiſe under my hand, to marry him this day month, if he continues to deſire it.

*Mrs. Hen.* To marry him! what can the boy mean? are you mad?

*Har.* Not abſolutely; what his friendſhip may be when the time of performance comes, I will not pretend to ſay; but I think him obliged to me; he ſays he has an imagination that can anticipate pleaſures; ſurely then he muſt allow himſelf indebted to me for having thus treated him with a whole month's pleaſing anticipation.

*Mrs. Hen.* But what could induce you to do ſo mad a thing.

*Har.* The temptation was ſtrong, I aſſure you. Finding his lordſhip ſo very warm and importunate a lover, a ſudden thought aroſe in my mind, that I

might poſſibly extract from it ſome advantage to Miſs Caroline; and that if I failed in the attempt, I might deliver myſelf from his lordſhip's addreſſes, by making his refuſal matter of quarrel. On this plan, uttered as ſoon as formed, I offered to marry his lordſhip at a ſtated time, if he would give conſent to an immediate union between his ſon and Caroline. Love conquered; and here is his conſent.

[*Shews the paper.*

*Mrs. Hen.* This part of the affair I like very well; but I cannot conceive how you will be extricated out of the difficulties in which you have involved yourſelf.

*Har.* I do not believe there will be any great difficulty in it. Your huſband has this morning aſſured me, that my mother is determined to declare my ſex, if ſhe can by no other means keep my father out of my vile uncle's hands; convinced that the deſire of poſſeſſing a ſon will conquer all my uncle's perſuaſions, and prevent his going with him. The ſecret therefore, you ſee, is on the point of being divulged; and common report will ſave me the trouble of damping the joy of my elated lover.

*Mrs. Hen.* But do you imagine he will take ſuch a diſcovery patiently? I tremble to think how much me may reſent it.

*Har.* Oh! my dear Henbury, let no fears of that kind diſturb you; take my word for it, though his lordſhip does not think himſelf too old to make love to a young woman, he will feel himſelf quite ſuperannuated, when fighting a young man is in queſtion;

queſtion; and I ſuppoſe you are afraid of no expreſſions of his reſentment, that are not carried at the point of his ſword.

*Mrs. Hen.* No, I cannot ſay that I much regard any others. But ſuppoſe Lady Edmonds ſhould not find it neceſſary to divulge the ſecret, what are you to do then?

*Har.* From that apprehenſion I endeavoured to fix the term of my ecclairciſſement with his lordſhip at the diſtance of three months, but the ardour of his paſſion would not ſuffer ſo long a delay, and rather than loſe an opportunity of ſerving my Emily's ſiſter, I determined to run the hazard of an earlier day. Circumſtanced as our family now is, I think it greatly improbable that a diſcovery can be avoided; but ſhould it be ſo, I fancy I may venture to truſt his lordſhip, who will rather keep my ſecret, than expoſe myſelf to the ridicule of ſo ſtrange a diſappointment.

*Mrs. Hen.* All things conſidered, perhaps the hazard is not ſo great as my fears repreſent it. But the perplexity of my mind will not ſuffer me to ſee any thing clearly. I am anxious to hear how affairs go on at your father's; but on my laſt attempt to ſee my lady, was refuſed admittance; the ſervants told me their maſter had forbidden them to let me in, and while he was in the houſe, they durſt not diſobey him.

*Har.* You may believe I am not leſs anxious, but it is a great relief in the preſent perturbation of my mind to have ſomething to draw off my thoughts

from ſo painful a ſubject, and to have the gratification of contributing to the happineſs of ſome of my friends, though I cannot procure my own, nor what is dearer to me, my mother's. I will inſtantly ſend to Lord Leſſingham to meet me at Mr. Martin's, and will acquaint Miſs Caroline with the favourable turn in her affairs. If you receive any intelligence from my father's, you will be ſo good as to communicate it to me without delay.

*Mrs. Hen.* You may depend upon me. [*Exeunt.*

# ACT V.

## SCENE I.

A ROOM IN SIR JEFFERY'S HOUSE.

JAMES *with an open letter in his Hand.*

IS this the reward of my long ſervices? wicked, baſe man! ——— to ruin my only child! my poor Nancy! —— nay, to murder her too! for that was nearly the caſe. ——— A raſcal! — a villain. — I will be revenged ;— and I can too. — Yes — yes, he ſhall ſuffer ; — I will have that comfort — but that will not ſave my girl ; — ſhe may die for all that ; — poor child, poor child ; I cannot bear to loſe her — my ſweet dear Nancy —

 [*Weeps.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter Mr.* HENBURY.

*Mr.* HENBURY.

HOW now, Mr. James? in tears, man? what is the matter with you? I did not think you ſubject to whimpering.

*James.* The ſtouteſt man in the world would cry if he had the cauſe for it that I have; but upon my ſoul I will not be the only one that ſhall cry. May I be damn'd if I am not revenged.

*Mr. Hen.* Hum—that is not a very ſaving courſe, I think.——But if any real misfortune has befallen you, I ſincerely pity you. I would offer my endeavours to ſerve you, but your maſter is too much your friend to ſuffer you to want any other.

*James.*

*James.* My maſter! Eternal vengeance ſeize him, he is the cauſe of all my ſorrow.——The raſcal — the vile raſcal — he ſhall ſuffer for it.

*Mr. Hen.* But what has he done? how can he have ſo violently exaſperated you?

*James.* I don't love to publiſh my own ſhame; but you will know it; you are a good man, and will pity me; that is ſome conſolation. I have juſt received this letter from my wife, read it, read it.—You will ſee all there.

*Mr. Hen.* [*After reading the letter.*] Horrible wretch! not only to ſeduce your daughter, but in order to prevent the conſequences, run the hazard of murdering her! It is almoſt too wicked to believe it poſſible.

*James.* Oh! nothing is too wicked for him;—murder is nothing to him—the devil himſelf is not more wicked; that I know well enough; but I did not think he would have ſerved me ſo, after all I have done for him.

*Mr. Hen.* [*Aſide.*] (Something uſeful may perhaps be gathered from this man's anger.) Mr. James, I pity you with all my heart; yet, perhaps he has never injured any one who had leſs reaſon to complain; have not you often aſſiſted him in amours equally criminal? And thus helped to fix the ſame dagger in the heart of other parents that now pierces your own?

*James.* I am afraid I have, I am afraid I have. Oh! Sir, do not remind me of my guilt. I am now paid home for it all.

*Mr. Hen.* So will the man ever be who acts the under part to a villain. After aſſiſting your maſter in the perpetration of ſo long a courſe of iniquities, you have no reaſon to wonder you are at laſt a victim to that wickedneſs from which you ſhould have fled: but if his bad example corrupted your mind, let this his laſt crime have a ſalutary effect, and prove the antidote to the poiſon you have ſo long imbibed. Let the ſenſe of the injury you have received, bring with it a ſenſe of your guilt, in ſo long conniving at actions equally criminal; and from what you ſuffer, learn to repent for the evil you have brought on others. Thus ſhall your preſent misfortune, which is but too juſtly befallen you, become a bleſſing; and the only true happineſs ariſe from your diſtreſs.

*James.* Alas! Sir, I feel the truth of what you ſay. I confeſs my conſcience has often reproached me for my guilty compliances with the vile man's orders, but I never thoroughly knew my own guilt till now; for I did not imagine human nature could feel the anguiſh that now tears my heart. But my grief has a particular aggravation; the ingratitude of the wretch who has injured me, who has made ſo vile a return for all my long and diligent ſervices.

*Mr. Hen.* Your ſufferings have indeed an heavy aggravation, but not that you mention. You have no juſt demand of gratitude from him; the man who facilitates our commiſſion of ſin, is our worſt enemy.

enemy. If you were ſtanding on the brink of a precipice, ſhould you think yourſelf obliged to the man who puſhed you down it? or, if ſome ſudden paſſion awakened in you a deſire to ſwallow poiſon, would any gratitude be due to the man who bought it for you? Juſt ſo much your maſter owes to you.

*James.* But if my ſervices have been wicked, at leaſt they have been faithful.

*Mr. Hen.* But to what could he ſuppoſe he owed your fidelity? Either to mercenary views, or a ſtrange depravity of nature. He ſaw you ungrateful to the power who had given you preſent being, and who offered you an eternity of happineſs: he ſaw you unfaithful to him who had endowed you with uſeful talents, in the very criminal uſe you made of them: how then could he either depend on your fidelity, or hope for your gratitude?

*James.* Oh! Sir, you wound me to the heart. I have indeed been ungrateful to my Maker, and unfaithful to the truſt he repoſed in me; I have nothing but wretchedneſs to expect in this life; and to think of the next is horror and madneſs.

*Mr. Hen.* Do not imagine I would have urged your guilt only to add to your diſtreſs.——No—it is only the impenitent ſinner whoſe caſe is hopeleſs. But you muſt not miſtake your preſent ſorrow for penitence; men naturally quarrel with their ſins while they are ſuffering under the conſequences of them; but thoſe are tranſient emotions, and ariſe from an averſion to pain, not from the awakening of virtue. We cannot be certain of the ſincerity

of our repentance till it appears in our actions; and the firſt to which we ought to apply ourſelves, is an endeavour to repair the injuries we have done.

*James.* Alas! that is not in my power; you ſtop me at the very threſhold; can I refund money that I never received? can I reſtore innocence to the ſeduced; or recal infants into being? If theſe are the principal works of penitence, penitence is not for me, but revenge is;—I can be revenged—and I will make the villain more wretched than I am.

*Mr. Hen.* To bring a villain to judgement, may, perhaps be a duty, but if it be undertaken only out of revenge, you but increaſe your own guilt; and after all, what puniſhment can you get inflicted on your maſter? Though the ſeduction of innocent women is one of the greateſt of crimes, yet the law takes no cognizance of it; had your daughter died, indeed, you might have proſecuted him for murder; and if you could not have capitally convicted him, you might have diſgraced him.

*James.* No new death is requiſite to enable me to convict him of murder; I have charges enough of that kind againſt him, to condemn him, and revenge me.

*Enter*

*Enter Mr.* EDMONDS, *who retires back unſeen by Mr.* HENBURY *and* JAMES.

*Hr. Hen.* Charges of murder againſt him! Is that poſſible? can he be ſo very great a villain? I will puſh him further. He ſeems to have been deep in his maſter's ſecrets. [*Aſide.*

*James.* There is no vallany too great for him; and the blackeſt crimes coſt him nothing. I ſpeak from my own knowledge, it is not on ſuſpicion that I would accuſe him, I know the whole but too well. The years that have elapſed ſince, will not ſave him from my vengeance; I can ſtill bring ſufficient proof.

*Mr. Hen.* You ſurprize and ſhock me. Who were the victims of his malice?

*James.* More the victims of his avarice than of his malice. I will tell you all, Sir, if you will put me in a way to bring him to juſtice, without expoſing myſelf to danger; though I think I could contentedly meet death, if I could but ſee him ſuffer firſt.

*Mr. Hen.* You may depend on my beſt advice: ſo deteſtable a crime ſhould not eſcape puniſhment. [*Aſide.*] How unſearchable are thy ways, oh! Providence. Thou makeſt the wicked to entangle himſelf in his own ſnares.——Go with me to my chamber, and we will there conſider coolly on the moſt prudent method of proceeding.

*James.*

*James.* A thouſand thanks to you, Sir. The hope of vengeance is a cordial to my heart.

*Mr. Hen.* Theſe are ſentiments, friend, which I hope to prevail with you to conquer; but your preſent too juſt reſentment makes this no proper ſeaſon, to endeavour it. When you are more calm, I truſt you will think differently. Let us retire? my chamber is more private.

*James.* I attend you, Sir. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Enter Mr.* EDMONDS.

AM I awake? am I in my ſenſes? Is it poſſible that villain ſhould betray me? he who has ever been my ready aſſiſtant, in whom I could never diſcover the leaſt compunction? the leaſt heſitation?——What can have moved him to this?—at a time too when he had reaſon to expect to be rewarded for all his ſervices; for hitherto I have led him on by hope, as the ſureſt means of continuing him in my ſervice, and ſecuring his ſecreſy.——He muſt have diſcovered my intrigue with his daughter.——Fool! Why ſhould he ſuppoſe that ſhe alone was ſacred? as if I had not the ſame right to her as to many others he has procured for me.——Yet I wiſh the girl had been leſs handſome, that I might have eſcaped this danger.——What can I do!——I tremble at his anger.——If he indeed has proof,

I am

I am undone.——He ſays he can convict me.—— It is too poſſible.——Yet his teſtimony alone will not be ſufficient, even though corroborated by Lady Edmonds's ſuſpicions. —— But he may have more evidence —— the apothecary —— or perhaps the nurſe.——Hell and furies! Death ſeems to threaten me on every ſide. I almoſt feel the fetters on my legs, and wherever I turn my eyes, I ſee nothing but gibbets. It were madneſs to wait the event of his conſultation with that formal fool.——Let me rather take the advantage of my good fortune in overhearing his treacherous deſigns. —— But what can I hope from flight? — a ſlower death. —— Starving muſt be my portion.——Had I but compleated my plan, my enemies might have done their worſt.—Every Kingdom is the rich man's home; but to a poor one the moſt populous city is a deſart. The proſecution going forward againſt me, together with Jack Allerton's reſentment, had determined me to leave England as ſoon as I could ſecure to myſelf a ſufficient part of my brother's fortune; had this diſcovery but been delayed till then!——But my flattering proſpects are vaniſhed, and what have I got by all my induſtry and arts? I have defrauded others indeed of money, but I have cheated myſelf of happineſs.——My life is at this moment ſuſpended on a thread; —— while I am endeavouring to contrive ſome means of preventing its being deſtroyed by famine, I am expoſing it to the danger of being ended by a ſhameful death. Curſed fortune! how haſt thou bubbled me at laſt! I have ſought thee through infamy and guilt; I have ſacrificed to thee conſcience, honour, virtue, my own peace, and the eſteem of others; and all thou giveſt me in return is ſhame and poverty. ——The deſtraction of my mind is ſo great, it will

not

not even ſuffer me to invent ſome means of getting at leaſt a preſent ſupply of caſh.——What I do, muſt be done inſtantly.—My brother is ready to ſet off on his journey—but mine muſt be performed alone.——I trifle too long; my perplexity will betray me into the gripe of the blood-hounds, who will ſoon be in full cry after me——I almoſt hear them already.——But when I have eſcaped them, who ſhall deliver me from my own remorſe, and the hatred of others! from ignominy, from contempt, from poverty!——Oh! miſerable ſtate of him, who ſeeks for happineſs through the paths of guilt.——Wretch that I am! nothing but horror and miſery await me.——One black dark ſcene only opens to my view.——No ray of comfort——no ſmiling hope to chear me on the dreary way I am to go.——Diſtreſs and wretchedneſs muſt ever be my portion.——Unpitied——unrelieved——perſecuted by man—abhorred by heaven.——Oh! fool! fool! fool! to barter integrity for wealth! innocence for luxury! Too late I feel my folly.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE IV.

SCENE CHANGES TO MR. MARTIN'S LODGING.

*Mr.* MARTIN, *and* EMILIA *weeping.*

EMILIA.

I Will obey you, Sir, ſince it muſt be ſo: I had rather be unhappy than diſobedient.

*Mr. Mar.* As you know how much I hate an unwilling compliance, you do very right, Emilia, in obeying me with ſo good a grace; if you conſented with viſible reluctance, you would loſe all the merit of obedience, as it would appear rather the effect of fear, than of affectionate ſubmiſſion to my will.

*Em.*

*Em.* Dear Sir, do not wound me in this manner. I do all that is in my power to oblige you; ſince you command it, I will give my hand to Sir Richard; but it is impoſſible for me to conceal how much that proof of my obedience coſts me. Pardon my reluctance, in conſideration of that duty which is ſtrong enough to conquer it; and be kind enough to ſpare my heart the additional pain your oblique reproaches give it. We are none of us abſolute maſters of our inclinations, mine are not in my power, but my hand is, and that ſhall be beſtowed according to your direction. Thus, Sir, as far as mortal power can reach, yours is abſolute over me. Can you deſire more?

*Mr. Mar.* No; it is ſufficient; in compliance with my command you give your hand; and I have no doubt, but in return to Sir Richard's fondneſs, you will give your heart. As love is not eternal, it is well to have none of it waſted before marriage, yours will come faſt enough after it, and will laſt the longer.

SCENE

## SCENE V.

*Enter Miſs* HARRIET EDMONDS.

YOUR ſervant young lady; you are come very opportunely to learn an uſeful leſſon of obedience from my daughter. Had you been taught it ſooner, you would now be in a happier ſituation than I fear you are.

*Har.* If you allude, Sir, to my having had the misfortune to diſoblige my father, I will aſſure you, that were I at liberty to tell all my reaſons for refuſing to marry Lord Leſſingham; you with all the world, would juſtify me, and acknowledge it was the only part I could act; and I flatter myſelf I ſhall be one day happy enough to hear you approve it.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Mar.* I am glad of it; whatever may be the event, it is always a good thing to have the teſtimony of our own conſcience in our favour. But I will leave you; I know girls are fond of talking of huſbands, and weddings, and fine cloaths, and jewels, and all the nonſenſical trumpery attending marriage. You are come in a good time to give Emily your advice on thoſe important articles; I leave you to ſettle what colours will beſt become her complexion, and what ſilks ſhew her ſhape to the beſt advantage. She is ſo happy in the proſpect of her approaching marriage, that you will find her in fine ſpirits; I dare ſay you will be excellent company; but though I ſhould have pleaſure in hearing your lively chat, yet my preſence might conſtrain you; ſo adieu. [*Exit.*

*Har.* What does your father mean, my Emily? you have not really conſented to marry Sir Richard?

*Em.* Indeed I have. My father inſiſted ſo peremptorily upon it, that I durſt no longer reſiſt his will.

*Har.* Oh! it is mighty well—as you liked Sir Richard, to be ſure you did very rightly.——You had pretended indeed, that he was diſagreeable to you, and I was fool enough to believe it:——but I ſee now that was meer affectation. [*Walks about.*

*Em.* Cruel Harriet! how can you inſult my diſtreſs? I did not expect this addition to my ſorrow. All my hope of conſolation was in you. I believed your friendly compaſſion would ſoothe me, and your

your reaſon ſupport my drooping ſpirits. But ſince you can be unkind, no comfort remains for me.

*Weeping.*

*Har.* Pardon me, my love; I know not what I ſaid. Are you indeed diſtreſſed? is your conſent to this marriage only the effort of ſuperior virtue? and are you then a victim to filial duty?—I ſee you are—thoſe flowing tears are certain evidences of it. [*Sits down by her.*] Lay your hand on my boſom, Emilia, you will find my heart beats uniſon with yours, and partakes of all your ſorrows.

*Em.* Now you are again my Harriet; my deareſt, my tendereſt friend. Oh! inſpire me with fortitude to compleat my promiſe, and teach me to acquit myſelf as I ought of the duties of this odious engagement.

*Har.* I aſſiſt you to perform ſuch a promiſe! no, my lovely, my deareſt Emily, never ſhall you be torn from theſe arms to be given to thoſe of another; here will I keep you for ever encircled, and while I fondly preſs you to my heart.—

*Em.* [*Breaks from her arms, and riſes.*] Harriet, are you diſtracted? what do you mean?

*Har.* I mean, that Sir Richard ſhall find that he muſt deprive me of my life, before he ſhall rob me of you.

*Em.* You terrify me. I ſee your diſtreſſes have ſhaken your reaſon; I wiſh I had diſſembled my grief, that I might not have increaſed the agitation of

of your ſpirits. Sit down, my dear, and compoſe yourſelf. I thought you had too much ſtrength of mind to have been ſo ſubdued by diſtreſs.

*Har.* Oh! my Emily! I am not mad, but you may well believe it. Love, indeed, that moment, got the better of my reaſon, but it has not totally dethroned it. I have put myſelf under a neceſſity to divulge a ſecret which only can account for my conduct, and prove that I am no lunatic. Know then that you, and all the world, are deceived in my ſex, and that I am no woman.

*Em.* Not a woman! good heavens!

*Har.* The cauſe of the concealment of my ſex you ſhall know hereafter; let me now tell you, that I have hitherto hidden the moſt ardent love, under the name of friendſhip; that I cannot live and ſee you in the arms of another. Think, my angel, what I muſt have ſuffered through all the progreſs of Luton's courtſhip; a thouſand times has the ſecret riſen to my lips, and with the greateſt difficulty have I ſuppreſſed the too warm expreſſions of my love to you, and my reſentment againſt him; but the ſituation wherein I now found you, threw me quite off my guard, the fear of having you torn from me, ſilenced every other conſideration; and having hazarded the diſcovery for the ſake of your ſiſter; my love for you has forced me to a plain declaration of it.

*Em.* You have now compleated my misfortune. I hoped at leaſt to have enjoyed the pleaſures of friendſhip, and to have found relief in your ſociety, till I could bring my perverſe heart to a proper ſenſibility

ſibility towards my huſband; but even that is now denied me; and I am condemned to that joyleſs inſipidity, which muſt be the lot of a perſon whoſe affections have no object; for here our acquaintance muſt end.

*Har.* Your meaning cannot be ſo cruel as your words.

*Em.* I am not at liberty to chuſe; you muſt be ſenſible that I ſhould be equally wanting in my duty to myſelf, and to the man who muſt be my huſband, were I to continue the leaſt intercourſe with you. No, Harriet, permit me to call you ſo a few minutes longer; by preſerving your acquaintance I ſhould not take the means of reconciling myſelf to my fate; my heart would be but the more refractory. I have begun the ſacrifice, and I muſt compleat it; here therefore let us part. The beſt wiſhes of the tender friendſhip I have ever felt for you, will attend you thro' every ſeaſon of our lives, but from this inſtant I diſclaim all converſation with you; and if you really love me, you will not oppoſe a reſolution ſo neceſſary to my peace.

*Har.* Cruel Emilia! can you thus condemn to a life of wretchedneſs, the perſon for whom you have profeſſed the ſincereſt friendſhip?

*Em.* You are not the perſon to whom I profeſſed it; Harriet Edmonds was my friend, if you are not the one, you can no longer be the other. I have moſt reaſon to complain; you have deceived me into an affection that muſt render me unhappy, but it ſhall not render me criminal. If I do not reproach you,

you, who have done wrong, ſurely you may ſpare me who only do my duty.

*Har.* Oh! my Emily! your affection for me cannot be ſufficient to give you much pain, if it will not prevent your marrying Sir Richard.

*Em.* I do not want to perſuade you it is great, there would be cruelty in it, of which I would not willingly be guilty, though the injury you have done in giving riſe to that affection, might excuſe my puniſhing you; but if I loved you with all the tenderneſs a heart can feel, I ſee not how it could prevent my marriage; duty required my conſent, and by giving it, I have now engaged my honour beyond all poſſibility of retracting.

*Har.* You have not given your word to Sir Richard?

*Em.* No; but to my father I have, and that, if poſſible, is ſtill more binding.

*Har.* My life, my angel, if you would not drive me to diſtraction, grant me one favour: give me leave to try if I cannot prevail on Mr. Martin to accept me inſtead of Sir Richard; my fortune will be ſuperior, my birth is at leaſt equal; ſurely if you will but join with me, and confeſs a preference in my favour, he cannot refuſe our requeſt.

*Em.* The ſecret you talked of is then one no longer.

*Har.*

*Har.* Alas! in my diſtraction I forgot, that poſſibly I am not yet at liberty to declare it. I ſhall ſoon know how that may be. I think my affairs are now come to ſuch a criſis, that it muſt be made known to my father; and if ſo, I am at liberty to all the world: but, my deareſt life, only avoid confirming the conſent you have given, till I can learn what has paſſed at home in regard to me; and if I ſhould find my diſguiſe is yet a ſecret there, I will endeavour to obtain my mother's permiſſion to declare it at leaſt to Mr. Martin, ſince my very exiſtence depends on this trial.

*Em.* I know not how far it will be in my power to comply with your requeſt; I am too much at my father's command to anſwer for myſelf; and I fear your attempt can be to no purpoſe: of all the men in the world he is the leaſt likely to break his word.

*Har.* For heaven's ſake do not deprive me of hope, it is depriving me of life.

*Em.* On one condition I will, in compliance with your deſire, endeavour to avoid ſeeing either my father or Sir Richard.

*Har.* Name your condition, and if poſſibly I can, I will grant it.

*Em.* It is, that, if you fail in your attempt of prevailing with my father, you will, without murmuring, acquieſce in the ceſſation of our acquaintance.

*Har.*

*Har.* Cruel condition! It is requiring me to ſacrifice my life; but it is yours, and I ſhall never heſitate at relinquiſhing it at your command.

*Em.* Why will you diſtreſs me thus? I beſeech you leave me. Let me at leaſt preſerve the appearance of fortitude. Leave me, leave me.

*Har.* I obey: but remember my life is in your hand; for be aſſured I could not long ſurvive the loſs of you. Deareſt of women, adieu.

[*Kiſſes her hand, and exit.*

*Em.* [*Sinking into a chair.*] How wretched is my fate! Reduced to baniſh the friend of my heart, to diſclaim the dear ſociety I have ſo long delighted in, and to be united in the cloſeſt connexion with a man I do not like. What could ſo much have added to my unhappineſs, as this ſtrange diſguiſe of my friend's? Had I known him to be a man, I ſhould never have indulged ſo tender an affection, nor have allowed him opportunity to give riſe to it: had he been really a woman, I might ſtill have enjoyed his friendſhip, and have therein found a ſource of happineſs in the midſt of all my misfortunes. But tho' I loved him, only believing him a woman, yet I find my affection will not ceaſe with that perſuaſion; the exceſs of his tenderneſs rather increaſes mine, and he becomes more dear to me by

the neceſſity I am under of diſclaiming his ſociety. I wiſh much to know the motive for his diſguiſe, but I dared not truſt myſelf with a continuance of the converſation; I found that I could no longer ſuppreſs my tenderneſs.

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

*Enter Miſs* CAROLINE.

CAROLINE.

IS Harriet gone?

*Em.* She has juſt left me.

*Car.* I wiſhed to have acknowledged my obligations to her, when I could have done it more freely.

*Em.* What obligations?

*Car.* Did not ſhe tell you what ſhe had done for me?

*Em.* She did not even mention you.

*Car.* It is plain the obligation ſhe has conferred, touched her much leſs than it has done me, or ſhe could not have been ſilent upon it.

*Em.* Pray what is it?

*Car.* Nothing leſs than obtaining Lord Bruton's conſent to his ſon's marriage with me.

*Em.* You amaze me! how was that poſſible?

*Car.* The means are no leſs extraordinary than the conſequences. Lord Bruton, who it ſeems is as ſuſceptible of the power of beauty as at five and twenty, has fallen deſperately in love with Harriet, and moſt importunately ſolicited her favour. She took advantage of the violence of his paſſion, and obtained a conſent to our marriage, written with his own hand, in return for a promiſe ſhe made him of marrying him at the end of the month, if he continued equally deſirous of it.

*Em.*

*Em.* Harriet, promiſe to marry Lord Bruton!

*Car.* Even ſo; but when ſhe mentioned this circumſtance, ſhe, ſmiling, told Lord Leſſingham to be under no apprehenſions of having a long jointure to pay her, for though ſhe deſigned keeping her word with Lord Bruton, yet ſhe did not think ſhe ſhould ever be our mother-in-law: ſo I ſuppoſe ſhe has ſome ſcheme of diſguſting his lordſhip, to make him releaſe her from her engagements: but I fear that may not be as eaſily effected as imagined? old lovers are very pertinacious, they are not eaſily ſhaken off.

*Em.* When did all this paſs?

*Car.* While my father and you were in private conference. Uneaſy on your account, and melancholy on my own, I was walking about my room in a pretty ſtrong fit of the vapours, when I ſaw Harriet approaching the houſe. She beckoned to me, and I went to her. She caught me by the hand, and hurried me into the grove, where ſhe had left Lord Leſſingham waiting for the interview, after having acquainted him with what ſhe had done for us; and leaving him to explain it fully to me, ſhe came to you.

*Em.* Will Lord Bruton keep his word, think you?

*Car.* Harriet adviſes us to take immediate advantage of it, offering to prevail on Lord Bruton to accompany her at our nuptials, that his preſence may give ſuch a ſanction to them, as he cannot afterwards retract; and Lord Leſſingham is now with my father, endeavouring to obtain his conſent.

*Em.* I wiſh he may find no difficulty in obtaining it.

*Car.* I hope not. My father to be ſure is very ſteady to his purpoſes, (if he diſappoints me in this, I will change the word ſteadineſs for obſtinacy) but it ſeldom blinds him to intereſt; and that is ſo much on the ſide of Lord Leſſingham's ſuit, that I flatter myſelf he will find out, that his lordſhip has always been poſſeſſed of his higheſt eſteem and favour.

*Em.* Your hope is not ill founded; he is not apt to be defective in prudence.

*Car.* I am afraid of aſking you the reſult of your *tête a tête* with him.

*Em.* And I am almoſt afraid of telling you; I tremble at the thought; and can ſcarcely bear to hear the ſound from my own lips, that I have promiſed

miſed te obey him, when he commands me to marry Sir Richard.

*Car.* I grieve to hear it; for though Sir Richard is certainly not a diſagreeable, and, I believe, not a bad man, yet, as you diſlike him, it is tyranny to inſiſt on your being united to him for life. Is it impoſſible, think you, my dear ſiſter, to conquer your averſeneſs, I will not call it averſion, to him?

*Em.* Indeed I fear it is.——[*Aſide.*] She knows not the chief cauſe, nor ought I to tell her; my Harriet's ſecrets muſt be ſacred to me; but how ſhould I conquer my diſlike to Sir Richard, when a compariſon ſo much to his diſadvantage will be continually occurring to me!

*Car.* To ſee my Emilia ſo penſive and dejected, caſts a gloom over the bright proſpect which my good fortune preſents to my view. My happineſs muſt be very imperfect, if my ſiſter is not happy.

*Em.* You cannot doubt but your being ſo will greatly alleviate my vexations; and, dejected as I am, I feel ſo lively an intereſt in your affairs as to be very anxious to know the ſtate of the conference between our father and Lord Leſſingham.

*Car.* They are in the back parlour; if we take

a turn or two the in garden, we may get ſuch a glimpſe of their countenances, as will enable us to gueſs whether the converſation is amicably carried on; and to find it ſo, will go far towards calming the perturbation of my ſpirits.

*Em.* The thought is a good one; if we can ſee their faces, we may from thence form a tolerable judgment of the ſtate of their minds. I attend you.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

SCENE CHANGES TO SIR JEFFERY'S HOUSE.

*Enter Sir* JEFFERY, *followed by two or three Servants.*

*Sir* JEFFERY.

ROBBED! plundered! my buroe broke open! fetch a conſtable.——An hundred and twenty guineas ſtolen! Go for a warrant.——I will find the villain—he ſhall ſwing for it——Let the chaiſe be put up——I will not leave the place till I have unkennel'd the thief.——Where is my brother?

did I not bid you deſire him to come to me? He will tell me what courſe I had beſt take.

*Thomas.* I have ſought every where, an pleaſe your honour, and he is not in the houſe, nor *nobody* can tell *nothing* about him.

*Sir Jeff.* Where is James? it may be he can tell.

*Thomas.* I did aſk James, an pleaſe your honour, but I *does* not dare to tell your honour what James ſaid, becauſe *as how* your honour *mought* be angry with me, for ſpeaking ſuch words.

*Sir Jeff.* If ſo be in caſe you only ſay what ſome body elſe ſaid to you, I won't be angry, ſo you may tell me.

*Thomas.* Why to be ſure, an pleaſe your honour, James was in a great fuſs, and a great quandary, and ſaid *as how* he hoped he was not run away, except he was run to the devil; for he would have hanged him if he had ſtaid, and he ſhould have been glad to have had the hanging of him; and called him a power of bad names.

*Sir Jeff.* Oh! the villain! the reprobate! to ſpeak ſo of my brother. Where can he be! he won't

won't be out long; we ſhould have ſet out above an hour ago, if waiting for him I had not fallen into a doze, and overſlept myſelf. Is there nobody can adviſe me?

*Ser.* Would your honour have me call Mr. Henbury.

*Sir Jeff.* Why, yes, you may call him, he is better than nobody. [*Exit Servant.*

*Sir Jeff.* Is my wife gone away?

*Thomas.* No, and pleaſe your honour, I hear'd Mrs. Patty ſay *as how* her lady was ſo ill, ſhe was not able to leave the houſe.

SCENE

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter* COACHMAN.

COACHMAN

AN't like your honour your beſt horſe is gone out of the ſtable. I did but as it were juſt turn my back to carry poor old Dobben to be ſhod, for poor old ſoul he wears out his ſhoes deſperate faſt; and when I came back I miſſed the bay-filly; I thought mayhap ſome of the men mought have taken her out to go of ſome meſſage; but when I came to enquire, they are all at home, and *nobody knows nothing* about it.

*Sir Jeff.* What will become of me! where will this end! my buroe broke open! my beſt horſe ſtolen! the horſe I valued ſo too!

*Coachm.*

*Coachm.* And ſo did I, I am ſure; our old coach-mare was her dam, and night and day I nurſed it. I am ſure I loved it as well as if it was my own brother. ——— Poor fool! it had the prettieſt fore-hand! and would go the pureſt tiff-up! Oh! I ſhall never ſee its like again! It was a jewel of a horſe. A man muſt have a heart of ſtone that would not grieve for the loſs of it.

*Sir Jeff.* Indeed, indeed, it is enough to make any body grieve.

*Coachm.* The parſon told us laſt Sunday, that the world is full of misfortunes, and ſo I find; I did not uſe to think it was ſo bad a place, but I now feel what wretched creatures we men are. ——— Well, to be ſure, this is the moſt unfortunable day I ever ſaw, except the day my poor dear wife died; and yet, I don't know how it is, I think I was not ſo ſadly ſorry as for the loſs of this pretty filly. A man may get another wife, if ſo be he be ſo minded, but I ſhall never bleſs my eyes with ſuch a ſweet towardly filly again.

SCENE

## SCENE IX.

*Enter Mr.* HENBURY.

*Sir* JEFFERY.

HERE's ſtrange things going forward, Mr. Henbury, very ſtrange things; what will the wickedneſs of this world come to? My buroe is robbed, my ſtable is robbed, and I don't know whether I am not robbed every where.

*Mr. Hen.* It is very ſtrange indeed, Sir.

*Sir Jeff.* I did not ſend for you to tell me that; I know all that without you; I ſent for you to tell me how I may get them again.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Hen.* I wiſh that were in my power, Sir, but it is no very eaſy matter. The firſt ſtep we have to take, is to endeavour todiſcover who it is that has committed the e robberies.

*Sir Jeff.* This is what I want to know.

*Mr. Hen.* Neither of the thefts could eaſily have been committed at this time of the day, but by ſome one in the houſe; it will therefore be proper to ſee who is miſſing; for it is plain enough that the perſon who broke open your buroe, is gone off on the horſe you have loſt.

*Sir Jeff.* So it is; let us call over all the ſervants, it muſt be one of them.

*Coachm.* But it is not though, an like your honour; here are all your men, but Bob Poſtillion, and I left him in the ſtable; and all the maids were together talking the matter over in the kitchen when I came to your honour; not that any womanbody could eaſily have rode away with bay-filley.

*Mr. Hen.* The only perſon miſſing, permit me to ſay it. Sir Jeffery, is Mr. Edmonds. I am ſenſible it muſt ſeem ſtrange to you to hear me expreſs a ſuſpicion that a man of his faſhion, a brother ſo much eſteemed by you, could be guilty of ſo mean a crime as robbery; but I can bring you proofs of actions of his ſo much more criminal, that this will appear a mere trifling fault.

*Sir Jeff.* It is impoſſible. My brother is the moſt honourable man in the world, and none but a villain

villain would abuſe him. Your malice will be all loſt upon me, I can tell you that, for I will hear no more of it.

*Mr. Hen.* Pardon me, Sir, but you muſt hear it, it concerns you nearly; and it will explain to you the reaſon of his flight.

*Sir Jeff.* I tell you I will not hear you; this is ſome vile ſcheme of my wife's, you and ſhe have plotted together to ſcandalize him. Why ſhould he rob me, when if ſo be, in caſe, he had aſked for more than he has taken, he ſhould have had it directly.

*Mr. Hen.* There ſeems to be great reaſon, Sir, in what you ſay, but the truth is, he could not ſtay to make the requeſt. The event ſhews, that he muſt have overheard his ſervant, James, informing me of a long ſeries of his villanies, and among the reſt, of his poiſoning your ſons in their infancy; and as he knew James had ſtronger proofs of theſe facts than his word, he judged it neceſſary to ſecure his ſafety by flight; and he ſeems to have been willing to provide, to the beſt of his power, one requiſite for travelling with convenience.

*Sir Jeff.* How dare you perſiſt in ſuch infamous ſcandal? my wife ought to be aſhamed of having any hand in trumping up ſuch a lie.

*Mr. Hen.* It is ſtrange that any man ſhould be obliged to defend ſuch a woman as Lady Edmonds, againſt aſperſions thrown on her by her huſband, who ought beſt to know her merit; but, Sir, I muſt take the liberty of ſaying, that you will be ſoon convinced,

convinced, ſhe is the moſt injured, as well as the beſt of women. You certainly ought not to believe any accuſation of Mr. Edmonds, on my word; but I can bring you ſuch unqueſtionable proofs of what I have ſaid, that it will be no longer in your power to doubt the truth of it. Give me leave, Sir, to wait on you into my lady's dreſſing-room, and there you ſhall hear every circumſtance of this dreadful villany; and by your preſence you will adminiſter the beſt conſolation ſhe can receive in the preſent diſtreſſed ſtate of her mind.

*Sir Jeff.* You amaze, you terrify me. I don't know what to do —— well, I will go with you, but I cannot believe it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE X.

SCENE CHANGES TO HARRIET'S LODGING.

HARRIET *and Mrs.* HENBURY.

HARRIET.

HOW cruel is this ſuſpence! ſhall we never hear what is going forward at home? My father is not gone to London, you ſay?

*Mrs. Hen.* He certainly is not. William, to whom I had given in charge to watch Sir Jeffery's door, ſays, that after the chaiſe had waited a long time, it was driven back, and ſet up again: that by

by the ſervants frequently paſſing the windows, they ſeemed to be running about the houſe in great confuſion; but he durſt not go near enough to enquire the cauſe.

*Har.* I fear ſome illneſs of my mother's may be the occaſion of it, and that may have ſtopped my father's journey; for were ſhe very ill, he could not be ſo inhuman as to leave the place. Whatever may be the conſequence, I muſt learn the ſtate of her health.

*Mrs. Hen.* I believe your fears are ill founded, for William ſaw my huſband at the parlour window, and ſays he has not ſeen him look ſo chearful for ſome days paſt; and this I am ſure would not be the caſe, if Lady Edmonds had any alarming diſorder.

*Har.* Of that I am very ſenſible; but William might be miſtaken; one cannot depend on an obſervation formed from ſo ſlight, and ſo diſtant a view. My mind is on the rack, I fear for my mother the conſequences of my father's knowing the deceit that has been put upon him; and I ſhall fear more for myſelf, his not being made acquainted with it.

*Mrs. Hen.* The time indeed is critical to you.

*Har*

*Har.* It is to the laſt degree. A few days may fix my wretchedneſs for life. To be received with fondneſs, as my father's heir, would be of no conſequence to me, if it be not time enough to prevent my Emily's marriage. If I loſe her, fortune can give me no pleaſure.

*Mrs. Hen.* Should the diſcovery even be made already, I fear it will be too late, Mr. Martin having engaged his word to Sir Richard.

*Har.* I know Mr. Martin's obſtinacy; but yet, were I at liberty to act, I would not deſpair of ſucceſs; a lover is ſtill a more obſtinate being than an old man; and he ſhould find it very difficult to marry his daughter to another, though he might refuſe to give her to me. Beſide, ſurely ſome gratitude is due to the perſon who has formed an union ſo neceſſary to his youngeſt daughter's happineſs, ſo advantageous to her fortune, and ſo honourable to his family. Lord Bruton has promiſed to ſee his ſon and Miſs Caroline united to-morrow.

*Mrs. Hen.* Indeed I think the old man is bound in duty to reward you with Emily's hand; but perhaps his pride will not ſuffer him to eſtimate the obligation ſo highly as it deſerves; and you cannot expect Lord Bruton will plead in your favour.

*Har.*

*Har.* No; I confeſs I cannot expect much benefit from him; but ſurely I may depend on all the intereſt of Lord Leſſingham and his bride. Gratitude to me, and love to Emily, muſt both operate in my favour: I cannot doubt having ſome intereſt in her heart, and I am ſure of her diſinclination to Sir Richard.

*Mrs. Hen.* I think a pity that man; whether he does, or does not obtain her, he is but in an aukward ſituation.

*Har.* I ſhould feel great compaſſion for him, were his love more generous and delicate; but what can one ſay for a man who perſiſts in endeavouring to obtain a woman's hand contrary to her inclination; he knows how averſe ſhe is to marrying him; to take advantage of her father's power is inſufferably ungenerous.

*Mrs. Hen.* I ſuppoſe he will plead the violence of his love, and tell you he cannot live without her.

*Har.* It muſt be love for himſelf then, and in the violence of that, there is no great merit; if he loved her he could not wiſh to render her unhappy. Where there is ſo little generoſity there can be no real

real affection, nor much of any other virtue; and how dreary is the proſpect of that woman's future days, who puts her happineſs into the power of a man who thinks only of his own gratification, and to procure it, will not ſcruple making her wretched.

*Mrs. Hen.* The man who acts on ſuch principles muſt find himſelf diſappointed; for in no very intimate connexion can one party be happy, if the other is not ſo.

*Har.* Not permanent happineſs, but preſent gratification, is the thing ſought by perſons who are devoid of delicacy and generoſity. Indeed it is all they are capable of enjoying; they are ſtrangers to the refinements on which our ſublimeſt pleaſures depend; they are formed only for animal life, and the mind has little to do either in their pains or pleaſures. Can ſuch a man dare to contend with me for my Emily.

SCENE

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

MADAM, Lady Edmonds desires you will come to her directly.

*Har.* Where is she? is she well?

*Serv.*

*Ser.* All that John knows, Madam, is, that Sir Jeffery and ſhe were together at their lodgings; and that ſhe looked very joyful when ſhe gave him the meſſage.

*Har.* Let us fly to her, Henbury. Surely affairs have taken a fortunate turn.

*Mrs. Hen.* This meſſage ſeems to promiſe you a happy meeting. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE XII.

SCENE CHANGES TO SIR JEFFERY'S Houſe.

*Sir* JEFFERY, *Lady* EDMONDS, *and Mr.* HENBURY.

*Sir* JEFFERY.

I Cannot forgive myſelf for being ſo impoſed upon.

*Lady Ed.* My dear Sir, do not let that thought diſturb you; who is there that may not be impoſed upon? Deceit is the villains weapon, and it is ſuch

an one as a good man cannot, eaſily defend himſelf from; his honeſty renders him unſuſpicious, and lays him open to the treachery of his adverſary. Vice may for a time triumph over virtue; but virtue is not on that account leſs amiable, nor leſs deſirable; even the evils that flow from it are endeared to us, by reflecting on their ſource.

*Sir Jeff.* But it is making ſuch a fool of one.

*Lady Ed.* By no means; more particularly in your caſe; how was it poſſible you could ſuppoſe your brother ſo bad a man! except the facts againſt him were fully proved, it would have been unnatural.

*Sir Jeff.* If ſo be that be the caſe, it is very well; but let it be as it may, I will think no more about it; ſince I have got one ſon and heir ſafe, I am contented; but I long to ſee him.

*Mr. Hen.* Your longing is ſoon gratified, Sir Jeffery, for here he comes.

SCENE

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* HARRIET, *and Mrs.* HENBURY.

HARRIET *runs to Lady* EDMONDS.

MY dear Madam, do I once more embrace you?

*Lady Ed.* My deareſt child, I muſt neither indulge my own tranſports, nor receive yours; duty commands their being ſuſpended; let me preſent to a father the worthieſt, the moſt amiable, of ſons.

*Sir Jeff.* [*Embraces Harriet.*] My deareſt boy, (if in caſe you are a boy) I am overjoyed to ſee thee, I wiſh thou hadſt been named Jeffery, but no matter for that, Sir Harry will ſound well enough; thy eldeſt ſon ſhall be called Jeffery, and then the Sir Jeffery will not end in me. How couldſt thou deceive me ſo, thou little dear raſcal, and paſs upon me for a trumpery girl?

*Har.* Had not the neceſſity for it been ſo often urged to me; I aſſure you, Sir, I could not have prevailed on myſelf to wear ſo long, a diſguiſe by no means pleaſing to me; but I hope, Sir, you will forgive it.

*Sir Jeff.* Forgive my boy! Ay ſure, what would I not forgive thee! I loved thee dearly, for all that has paſſed, when I took thee for a girl; but I love thee ten times better now that thou art a boy. Forgive thee! Why, I have forgiven thy mother; if ſo be, that in caſe ſhe had put a trick upon me without reaſon, do you ſee, I ſhould never have forgiven her; but James, and one or two more, who knew all the villany, have told us the whole ſtory; as how my wicked brother was by the devil ſet upon killing all my ſons; ſo that if ſo be my lady had not paſſed you off for a girl, you would not have been here now, and I ſhould have had no heir of my own loins. I would hang the villain if I could catch him, for all he is my own brother, for he

he is the more unnatural wretch for that: to poiſon my children, rob my buroe, and ſteal my beſt horſe!

*Lady Ed.* His wickedneſs will be his puniſhment. Diſtreſs of circumſtances, and the ſtings of conſcience, inflict ſeverer pangs than the halter or the axe: I ſhould be ſorry to ſee the brother to my huſband, and the uncle of my children, brought to a public execution.

*Sir Jeff.* Why, to be ſure, as you ſay, my lady, it would be a little diſgraceful to have him hanged, and yet he deſerves no better, wicked wretch as he is. But I have got my ſweet dear little Harry here, for all him.

*Har.* Thanks to my mother's care, I live to endeavour, by my duty and affection, to increaſe the happineſs of your future years. To her prudence and goodneſs we are indebted for this bleſſing.

*Sir Jeff.* Why, aye, that is true; I believe ſhe is a good woman, for all what brother uſed to ſay; but you muſt not love her better than your own dear father, Harry.

*Har.* I ſhall ever retain the tendereſt, the moſt dutiful affection, for both; and let you and I, Sir, try which can love her beſt. The many afflictions ſhe has ſuffered, deſerve all the compenſation we can make.

*Sir Jeff.* There is ſomething in what you ſay, Harry, and I will do every thing you deſire; I love you ſo dearly, I can refuſe nothing you aſk.

*Lady Ed.* Excellent youth! What ſufferings can be ſo great, that the bleſſing of having ſuch a ſon would not more than compenſate!

*Enter*

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Serv.* Lord Bruton is come to wait on your honour.

*Sir Jeff.* Oh! aſk him to walk up, deſire him to walk up. [*Exit ſervant.*] He cannot take it ill now, you know, that my Harry would not marry his ſon; if ſo be in caſe he had, he would have made but a ſcurvy ſort of a wife, he, he, he; a very ſcurvy wife, he, he, he.

## SCENE XIV.

*Enter Lord* BRUTON.

*Mrs.* HENBURY, *aſide to* HARRIET.

HOW will you come off now?

*Har.* I know not; I ſhall be put to the utmoſt ſtretch of my aſſurance. [*Aſide to Mrs. Henbury.*

*Lord*

*Lord Bru.* Your ſervant, Sir Jeffery. I came to pay a viſit to you and Mr. Edmonds; but I am moſt agreeably ſurprized to ſee your lovely daughter here; all now I hope is peace and amity.

*Sir Jeff.* Why look you, my Lord, I am too much overjoyed to know much about peace; I am all in a fluſter now, but I ſhall be peaceable enough by and by; but you muſt know, my lord, that my lovely daughter here is a lovely ſon; and that you know is a better thing. I am ſure your lordſhip will now forgive the refuſal your ſon met with; Harry would not have made a fit wife for a nobleman, for they want heirs to keep up their family, and poor Harry could never have been the mother of children, he, he, he. But if your lordſhip has a daughter, that would make another kind of a ſtory; I dare ſay he would make a very good father.

*Lord Bru.* Your daughter ſon! what do you mean, Sir Jeffery? you are very jocoſe, I perceive, but I proteſt I do not underſtand the jeſt.—[*Aſide.*] What a fool they make of the man!

*Lady Ed.* It is very true, my lord, for reaſons your lordſhip may hereafter know; the ſex of that young man has hitherto been concealed, and he has

paſſed for our daughter; but the diſguiſe being no longer neceſſary, he will henceforward appear in a character more worthy of him.

*Lord Bru.* Amazement! Pardon me if I apply to the perſon who certainly beſt knows the truth of this affair. —— Madam, —— Sir, I know not what to call you, is it true that you are no longer Miſs Edmonds?

*Har.* It is moſt certain; I never had a natural right to be ſo, my lord; the title was given me only by courteſy; and I very readily relinquiſh it for any that is more ſuitable to my ſex.

*Lord Bru.* Very well, Sir —— am I well uſed?

*Har.* Why, really, my lord, I am afraid I ought to confeſs, that I have taken ſome unjuſtifiable liberties with your lordſhip; but what could I do? you were ſo importunate a lover, reſiſtance was impoſſible. Could I convert myſelf into a woman, your lordſhip cannot doubt but I would make uſe of the power, ſince without it I offer to fulfil my engagement, and to marry you, if you ſtill ſigh for the poſſeſſion of this fair hand; but I am apprehenſive that, agreeable to the ſuggeſtions of my prophetic ſpirit, I ſhall find your lordſhip an inconſtant lover.

*Lord*

*Lord Bru.* Thou art a very impudent young fellow; I ſee that; your impudence goes farther towards convincing me, that you have indeed hitherto worn a diſguiſe, than all the aſſertions made by the company. But do you think, Sir, that I ſhall ſit down quietly under this deceit; tricked as I am of my conſent to a match which I ſhould otherwiſe never have permitted!

*Har.* As for your bearing it quietly, my lord, I do not pretend to think about it; you certainly have a right to take your choice. I do not attempt to defend the part I have acted towards your lordſhip, for I really think you have juſt cauſe of complaint; though, perhaps, ſome excuſe might be made for me, in conſideration of your having endeavoured to force your ſon into a marriage, which, had I been a proper mate, muſt, from his diſinclination to the match, have rendered me unhappy. The conſent, out of which you ſay I have tricked you, is neither diſhonourable to your family, nor much to your ſon's pecuniary diſadvantage; however, if what I have ſaid does not ſatisfy you, I have ſo great a regard for your lordſhip, that I am willing to give you ſuch ſatisfaction as you ſhall require, at any place or time you ſhall pleaſe to appoint.

*Mrs. Hen.* [*Aſide to Harriet.*] What do you mean?

*Har.*

*Har.* [*Aſide to Mrs. Henbury.*] To quiet his lordſhip. Be under no apprehenſions. See how his anger ſubſides; how the muſcles of his face relax into placidity.

*Lady Ed.* What are we to underſtand by this altercation between you and Lord Bruton?

*Sir Jeff.* I know as how I can underſtand nothing about it.

*Har.* When I have his lordſhip's permiſſion, I will readily explain it to you.

*Lord Bru.* Well, I ſee no one but myſelf, will look upon it otherwiſe than a jeſt, therefore I believe my wiſeſt way will be to join in the laugh; yet, I ſhould wiſh it may tranſpire as little as poſſible out of this company; I ſhall be thought an old fellow indeed, not to know a man from a woman.

*Har.* Beſide this company, it is known to no perſons, but Lord Leſſingham and Miſs Martin; and I am ſure you may depend both on their ſecrecy and ours; though an error wherein your lordſhip has ſo many companions, can bring no reflexion on

on your diſcernment: I think the ridicule may more properly fall on me, for the effeminacy of my appearance; however, your lordſhip may command our ſilence; and I muſt acknowledge myſelf much obliged to you for ſo readily forgiving me the deceit.

*Lord Bru.* Thou art a fine ſpirited young fellow, it is impoſſible to be angry with thee; and though I liked thee better as a girl, yet you will make me ſome amends if you will look upon me as one of your friends. I perceive Madam (to Lady Edmonds) you and Sir Jeffery ſtill ſeem a little puzzled; the ſolution of the riddle is ſhort and eaſy; that equivocal perſonage had promiſed to make me your ladyſhip's ſon-in-law.

## SCENE LAST.

*Enter Mr. and Miſs* MARTINS, *Lord* LESSINGHAM, *and Sir* RICHARD LUTON.

*Mr.* MARTIN.

YOU muſt forgive our intruſion, gentlemen and ladies; ſtrange ſtories go about, we are told of metamorphoſis as extraordinary as any in Ovid, and are come to inquire into the truth. Is it ſo, Sir Jeffery? Do girls turn into boys at your houſe?

*Sir*

*Sir Jeff.* Yes, yes, that they do; Harriet is turned into Harry, that is all.

*Mr. Mar.* I wiſh you joy, I wiſh you joy heartily; the change is for the better; I do not care if one of my girls would do the ſame. Will you ſhew Emily the way, young gentleman: Lord Leſſingham ſtands ſo near me, I dare not deſire you to give Caroline your inſtructions; for I ſuppoſe his lordſhip likes her rather better as ſhe is.

*Lord Leſſ.* Yes, indeed, Sir, I bar all ſuch metamorphoſes. I can conſent to no manner of change in my Caroline.

*Har.* You cannot find a perſon, Sir, who, if he had that power, would be more averſe to exerciſing it on Miſs Emilia.

*Sir Jeff.* Ah! ſuch bleſſings don't fall to every one's ſhare, but I wiſh you were as happy as I am. I am ſo overjoyed to find my Harriet a boy, that I ſcarcely know where I am. I love him now ten times better than ever. Art thou as happy as I am, my dear Harry?

*Har.* I wiſh I were, Sir, and it is in the power of

of you and this gentleman (pointing to Mr. Martin) to make ſo.

*Sir Jeff.* How? how? I will do any thing for thee, if ſo be, it be in my power.

*Har.* Though I cannot convert Miſs Emilia into a ſon, at Mr. Martin's deſire, if you can prevail with him to accept me as ſuch, you will render me the happieſt of mankind. I have long ſmothered in my breaſt the ſincereſt, the tendereſt paſſion, for the lovely Emily; denied the relief of even declaring it to herſelf; and if I may not obtain her, I muſt be the moſt wretched of beings, till death brings me relief.

*Sir Rich.* How, Sir?

*Sir Jeff.* The poor boy makes me cry for very pity.

*Mr. Mar.* Sir Richard, don't be under any diſturbance, you have my word; and you, young gentleman, ought to know that Solomon Martin never broke his word in his life, nor ever will.

*Sir Jeff.* How can you have the heart now to vex my poor boy? Conſider I have but juſt got him;

him; don't ſpoil all my pleaſure, by making him pine and grieve. I'll ſettle any jointure you pleaſe upon your daughter, if in caſe you will let him have her. I will make him as good a match as you can deſire.

*Mr. Mar.* What the devil had he to do to be maſquerading? I ſhould have liked him as well as another if he had come in time, but my word is engaged.

*Har.* [*Aſide to Emilia.*] Deareſt Emily, join your entreaties with mine; if you have any regard for me, let not an ill-timed baſhfulneſs blaſt all my hopes.

*Car.* [*Aſide to Emilia.*] This is no time for reſerve, ſpeak your choice boldly, and throw not your happineſs away.

*Lord Leſſ.* [*Aſide to Emilia.*] Silence would now be inexcuſable: take courage—— (to Mr. Martin) though you have given your word to Sir Richard, Sir, yet it muſt be on a ſuppoſition, that your daughter's choice concurred with yours; I am ſure you are to good a father to wiſh to force her inclinations. Let us know therefore from her own lips, how ſhe ſtands affected.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Mar.* You may know it from mine, Sir; my daughter's inclinations are always the ſame as her father's. My choice is hers.

*Lord Bru.* That does not appear to me ſo certain, Mr. Martin; if I can read the young lady's countenance, ſhe has a choice of her own.

*Lord Leſſ.* Speak, Madam, have you given either your word or heart to Sir Richard?

*Sir Rich.* I beg your lordſhip will not interfere in an affair that no way belongs to you, if you would not have me reſent the impertinence as I ought. As Mr. Martin has told you I have his word, and whether I have the lady's or no, is not your buſineſs; I have no reaſon to doubt her bleſſing me with her hand.

*Em.* My hand, Sir, can never be a bleſſing to you, becauſe I cannot give it but with the utmoſt reluctance. I have frankly declared my diſinclination; I have told you, that to marry you, would make me wretched. I had then only my indifference to render me ſo; I have now an additional cauſe, my affection for another; for I will not deny my prepoſſeſſion in that gentleman's favour, (pointing to Harriet) founded in the tender friendſhip I conceived for him, while he appeared of my own ſex. You have hitherto taken an ungenerous advantage

vantage of my duty to my father; you may do ſo ſtill, for though my life ſhould prove the ſacrifice, I will never diſobey him: but you would do well to conſider whether you would act wiſely in driving me to deſperation.

*Mr. Mar.* I hope good folk you are now ſatisfied: though you would not take my word, you will, I preſume, take hers, when ſhe tells you that ſhe concurs with me in the choice of Sir Richard.

*Lady Ed.* Mr. Martin, Mr. Martin, this is no time for ſuch foolery, when your daughter's happineſs is at ſtake, a pretended miſunderſtanding of her words is unpardonable; on matters leſs important indulge your whim, aſſert that black is white, that night is day, or any abſurdity you pleaſe, but do not ſacrifice her to your caprice; do not inſult her by ſuch pretended miſconſtruction. The word of every man of honour ſhould be ſacred, I therefore cannot aſk you to violate yours, but I am ſure Sir Richard will give you back your promiſe. It is impoſſible, after what he had heard, that he can be mean, baſe, nay fooliſh enough, to inſiſt on the performance.

*Sir Rich.* I ſhall, no doubt, be thought extremely daring to act a part your ladyſhip has honoured with ſo many expreſſive epithets; *but* I proteſt I cannot think of relinquiſhing.

*Lord Leſſ.* Dear Sir Richard, what can you expect from marrying a woman whoſe heart is engaged to another? You who are ſo well qualified to gain a lady's affections, that perhaps Miſs Martin is the

the only one you can addreſs, that would not make you a ſuitable return.

*Lord Bru.* Faith, Sir Richard the caſe would not admit of a doubt. Women are not ſo ſcarce, nor ſo coy, that a clever young fellow like you, need be reduced to marry a girl againſt her will. Upon my ſoul there is no ſuch ſuperfluity of happineſs in the married ſtate, when the woman joyfully becomes a bride, as ſhould tempt a man to enter into it with an unwilling fair one. The kindeſt wife is but a leſſer evil.

*Car.* [*Aſide to Lord Bruton.*] Was your lordſhip always of that opinion?

*Lord Bru.* [*Aſide to Caroline.*] Not abſolutely; my opinion has been ſubject to little variations; yeſterday made a change in my ſyſtem, but I have returned it to-day.

*Lord Leſſ.* Come, prithee, Luton, act like a man of ſenſe and generoſity, and reſign a woman who cannot make you happy, ſince being yours will render her wretched.

*Sir Rich.* I am prodigiouſly obliged to you, good people, for being ſo ready to direct my conduct; but as I have been ſome years out of tutelage. I have learnt to be a free agent, and intend to continue ſo. Mr. Martin, will you fulfil your promiſe of giving me this lady?

*Mr. Mar.* I never broke one, and I ſhall not begin at theſe years; take her then (gives him Emily's

ly's hand) and make the beſt of her; you know how the land lies; if the man who is acquainted with the rocks and ſhoals that lie in his way, cannot avoid ſhipwreck, he muſt be an unſkilful mariner. You have been fully informed by ſome of the good company of the dangers that threaten you, you muſt ſteer your courſe cautiouſly, or you may have reaſon to wiſh I had ſhewn leſs regard to my word.

*Em.* [*Kneels to her father and to Sir Richard.*] Dear Sir, if you have any tenderneſs, any compaſſion for your daughter. —— Sir Richard, if you really feel any love for me — do not thus cruelly doom me to a life of wretchedneſs! [*Weeps.*

*Ser Rich.* Riſe, Madam, and ceaſe theſe unavailing ſolicitations. You are mine; your father has reſigned you to me, and as my property I ſhall diſpoſe of you.——Mr. Edmonds, will you accept this lady from my hands?

*Har.* Generous, Sir Richard! accept her! yes, as the beſt gift of heaven, my deareſt Emily! Teach me how to thank (as I ought) this worthy man.

*Em.* You cannot learn of me, ſince I want words even to thank him as he deſerves on my own account.

*Sir*

*Sir Rich.* Spare me your thanks, my lovely girl, as they will obliquely tell the ſtrength of your averſion to me.

*Har.* However ſtrong it may have been. you have now rendered yourſelf a dangerous rival; for ſo generous an action is ſufficient to make a revolution in my Emily's heart, and give you the ſovereignty there.

*Em.* If love neceſſarily followed eſteem, Sir Richard might indeed expect a conſiderable ſhare of my affections.

*Har.* May I hope, Sir, that you and my excellent mother will ſanctify my choice, and obtain the concurrence of Mr. Martin?

*Sir Jeff.* Any thing, my dear boy; I will do any thing that you deſire.

*Lady Ed.* If your choice were leſs agreeable to me, I could not in ſo fortunate an hour have refuſed my concurrence; but might I have directed your heart, it ſhould have been to the gentle, the lovely Emilia; and I hope Mr. Martin will not deſtroy the pleaſure of ſo happy a day, as I am ſure

Sir

Sir Jeffery will readily comply with whatever ſettlement, or other conditions, he ſhall require.

*Mr. Mar.* Why, look you, Madam, it is the very thing I ſhould have wiſhed, had I known it was poſſible; and this Emilia knew well enough, or ſhe would not have choſen the young gentleman. I am ſure ſhe would not have acted ſo improperly as to have conſented to any thing without believing ſhe had the ſanction of my *tacit* approbation, at leaſt.

*Har.* My ſtudy, Sir, ſhall be to ſhew by obedience to you, and affection to your daughter, that I am not unworthy the happineſs you give me.

*Lord Bru.* Where is Mr. Edmonds, he ought to be a witneſs of the general joy.

*Mr. Mar.* Oh! as for him he is gone to the devil, I believe; I met him as I was taking the air this afternoon, riding as if the devil drove him. I called to him, but he would not ſtop. I ſuſpected he was gone mad, and expected to have ſeen a parcel of fellows at his heels in purſuit of him, but I met none; I cannot tell what made him look ſo frighted.

*Sir Jeff.* He had reaſon enough, if ſo be he did look frighted. Oh! my lord, you cannot think what

what a vile wretch he has been. I wiſh people had followed him, if in caſe they had overtaken him, that he might be brought to juſtice for the harm he has done us.

*Lady Ed.* No, my dear, it is better as it is; conſcience wounds deeper than the ſword of juſtice; and though its arrows will ſometimes be blunted by proſperity, in adverſity and diſtreſs, they are acutely felt. And when I conſider what he muſt ſuffer under the oppreſſion of poverty and remorſe, my reſentment ſubſides, and I cannot ſuppreſs ſome emotions of compaſſion. But let us turn our thoughts from ſo melancholy a ſubject, enjoy without alloy, the bleſſings which now open on our view, and draw from our reflections, on what is paſſed, irrefragable arguments, to convince us, That though the villain may triumph for a day, virtue alone can yield permanent happineſs, can give preſent peace and future felicity.

THE END.